

THE INTELLIGIBLE CREATOR-GOD AND THE INTELLIGENT SOUL OF THE
COSMOS IN PLATO'S THEOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS

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and Metaphysics

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To My Makers

Mom and Dad

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ABSTRACT

THE INTELLIGIBLE CREATOR-GOD AND THE INTELLIGENT SOUL OF THE
COSMOS IN PLATO'S THEOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS

Jason G. Rheins

Charles H. Kahn and Susan Sauvé Meyer

When Plato discusses the World-soul, cosmic intellect (nous), and the Demiurge, he approaches them theologically, i.e. as being the subjects of an account of the nature of the gods, but few works in the last half-century or more have addressed the 'players' in Plato's theology as such. The major strata in the hierarchy of divine beings were referred to in the Neo-Platonist tradition as "hypostases". My question is this: between intellect, the World-soul, the Demiurge, and even the Forms how many hypostases did Plato posit, what were their nature, and what overall functions did they play in his philosophical system.

I analyze Plato's various accounts of those divine things that are immanent in the world of change (e.g. the World-soul) and those that are said to be transcendent intelligibles (e.g. the Forms and the Demiurge) in order to determine what Plato's gods are, and what roles they play in his system. I examine the entire Platonic corpus, but I focus on Plato's late dialogues, in which theology and cosmology receive considerably more extensive and significant treatment than they do in his earlier works. My central texts are the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and book X of the *Laws*, supplemented secondarily by the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, *Statesman*, and *Epistle VII*. I also make cautious use of the testimonia regarding Plato's so-called "unwritten doctrines".

The invention of the World-soul is revealed to be Plato's way of instantiating intellect in the cosmos in order to suit the demands of his natural and moral philosophy, while his esoteric account of the Demiurge resolves any tensions between his immanent theology and his metaphysics, and suggests, semi-literally, the role that timeless, intelligible goodness plays in organizing the sensible world of change.

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ABREVIATIONS OF TITLES

Albinus
Did. = *Didaskalikos*

Aristophanes
N. = *Clouds*

Aristotle
APo. = *Posterior Analytics*
Cat. = *Categories*
DA = *De Anima*
DC = *De Caelo*
GA = *Generation of Animals*
Met. = *Metaphysics*
PA = *Parts of Animals*
Phys. = *Physics*
Protr. = *Protrepticus (Fragments)*

Aristoxenus
EH = *Elementa Harmonica*

Augustine
DCD = *De Civitate Dei*

Cicero
DFB = *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*
DND = *De Natura Deorum*
EpA = *Epistulae ad Atticum*
EpF = *Epistulae ad Familiares*

Diogenes Laertius:
D.L. = *Vitae Philosophorum*

Plato
Apo. = *Apology*
Crat. = *Cratylus*
Crit. = *Critias*
Euth. = *Euthyphro*
Euthd. = *Euthydemus*

Ep. = *Epistles*
Grg. = *Gorgias*
L. = *Laws*
Lys. = *Lysis*
Men. = *Meno*
Parm. = *Parmenides*
Phd. = *Phaedo*
Phdr. = *Phaedrus*
Phl. = *Philebus*
Pol. = *Statesman (Politician)*
Prot. = *Protagoras*
R. = *Republic*
Soph. = *Sophist*
Sym. = *Symposium*
Tim. = *Timaeus*
Tht. = *Theaetetus*

Plotinus
Enn = *Enneads*

Plutarch
DAPT = *De Animae Procreatione in Timaeo*

Proclus
ETh = *Elements of Theology*
In Tim. = *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*
Th.P. = *Platonic Theology*

Simplicius
In DA = *In Aristotelis libros de anima commentaria*
In DC = *In Aristotelis quattuor libros de caelo commentaria*

Xenophon
Mem. = *Memorabilia*

Introduction

§I. Theology in Plato's Philosophy and its Interpretations

Although it drew the attention of the greatest Plato scholars of the late 19th and earliest 20th century, in the last half century, Plato's theology has received relatively little serious attention in the field of Platonic studies.¹ Plato's views on the nature(s) and function(s) of the gods have not been widely acknowledged to be central or even significant issues in Plato's philosophy for some time. However, in recent years there has been a welcome and renewed interest in the *Timaeus* and *Laws* – the two works most rich in theological content within the Platonic corpus – and in consequence there has been a slowly but steadily growing rivulet of works that seriously address Plato's theology.²

The topic's lack of acclaim is appropriate if the gods really were (relatively) insignificant players in Plato's system and if his treatment of them was marginal. So the real question to be asked is this: how important was Plato's theology to Plato? If it was unimportant for him, then it need not be of any greater concern for us, especially given the very small role that theology currently plays in mainstream, non-ecclesiastical

¹ Archer-Hind [1888]; Shorey [1888], [1930]; Piat [1905]; Zeller [1923]; Theiler [1924]; Diès [1927], [1955]; Taylor [1928] on which see Betegh [2000]; Frutiger [1930]; Hackforth [1932], [1936]; Solmsen [1936], [1942]; Tate [1936], [1943]; Cornford [1937], [1938]; Armstrong [1938]; Moreau [1939]; Skemp [1942]; Cherniss [1944], [1945]; Wolfson [1947]. From the mid 20th century see: Morrow [1954]; Verdenius [1954]; Doherty [1956], [1961]; Van Camp and Canart [1956] on which see Kidd [1958]; Xenakis [1957]; Legido López [1959]; Chen [1961]; Schneider [1966]; Fustigièr [1966-1968]; Corvez [1967]; Robinson, T.M. [1967]; De Vogel [1970], [1986]. Finally, Brisson [1974] is an exceptionally thorough and important contribution.

² The most important new contributions are Karfik [2004] (on which see Johansen [2005]) and Bordt, M. [2006] on which see Sattler [2007]. In recent literature, see: Burkert [1985]; Mohr [1985] on which see Lee [1991]; Robinson, T.M. [1986], [1995b]; Gerson [1990]; Hampton [1990]; Menn [1992], [1995]; Morgan [1992]; Reale [1993]; Scott [1994]; Benítez [1995]; Naddaf [1996], [2004]; Pelikan [1997]; von Perger [1997] on which see Gerson [1998]; Ferrari [1998]; Perl [1998]; Velásquez [1998]; Enders [1999]; Opsomer [1999]; Reydam-Schils [1999]; Cleary [2000]; Dillon [2000a], [2003a]; Halfwassen [2000], Neschke-Hentschke [2000b]; Zeyl [2000]; Brisson [2002], [2010]; Johansen [2003], [2004], on the former see: Tarrant [2004], Betegh [2005], Carson [2007], and Dillon [2006]; Carone [2005] on which see Lautner [2006]; Janko [2006]; Lautner [2006]; Drozdek [2007]; Sedley [2007]; Jirsa [2008]; Mayhew [2008]; McPherran [2009]; Long [2010]; Mason [2010]; and Teisserenc [2010]. An aspect of Plato's theology that has begun to be studied more thoroughly in Anglophone scholarship is the idea of 'becoming like god' see: Menn [1992]; Sedley [1997]; Armstrong [2004]; Mahoney [2005].

philosophy. On the other hand, if theology was crucial to Plato's philosophy, then giving it only scanty attention cannot possibly serve to improve our understanding of his *Weltanschauung*, much less the theologically-heavy reception of his thought in almost all subsequent eras of philosophy. Howsoever great our own intellectual distaste for theology might be, ideologically palatable anachronisms will not better illuminate the history of thought for us nor provide us with more truthful insights into the internal logic and development of philosophical systems.

Did theology matter to Plato? That general question can be answered only by making an earnest effort to find and understand whatever Plato has to say about the nature of the divine. This dissertation explores one specific issue in Plato's theology, albeit a fundamental one: what are the gods? Nonetheless, it will at least indirectly constitute an argument to the effect that Plato's theological thought was far more important and central to his worldview than it is generally acknowledged to be at present.

A number of different questions might be addressed under the heading "theology", but henceforth what will be meant are specifically those questions about the existence and basic nature of the gods, and the question I have set out to answer is this: What are the gods for Plato, and what does he think that they do.

§II. Five Recurrent Features in the study of Plato's Theology

Interpretations of Plato's theology (in the sense just specified) and the debates thereupon have focused from antiquity to the present on a relatively contained number of central topics. Here, I will name five of the most important ones, and the ones that are the most salient to the work of my dissertation.

1. *The Difficulties in Demonstrating its Coherence*

First, there has been strong and oft-repeated skepticism as to the coherence of Plato's theology, so much so that some have maintained that Plato had no official theology to speak of. In Cicero's *Natura Deorum*, a dialogue representing the theological views of the Epicureans, and Stoics and skeptical objections to them, Velleius the Epicurean says,

The inconsistencies of Plato are a long story. In the *Timaeus* he says that it is impossible to name the father of this universe; and in the *Laws* he deprecates all inquiry into the nature of the deity. Again, he holds that god is entirely incorporeal.... Yet both in the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* he says that the world, the sky, the stars, the earth and our souls are gods, in addition to those in whom we have been taught to believe by ancestral tradition; but it is obvious that these propositions are both inherently false and mutually destructive.³

Velleius' evaluation, whether true or false, points to several reasons that Plato's theology has been so difficult to reconstruct with adequate coherence and intelligibility. First of all, Plato's statements about the gods are spread across numerous dialogues. These statements are uttered by different characters in works with differing dramatic contexts and perhaps even different intended audiences.

³ *DND* I.30; Translation Harris Rackham [1933]. Much of Velleius' speech closely agrees with book I of *Περὶ Ἐνσέβειας* (*Concerning Piety*), by Cicero's Epicurean contemporary, Philodemus. Their common source is probably the *Περὶ Θεῶν* (*Concerning Gods*) of Phaedrus, the head of the Epicurean school in Athens during Cicero's youthful studies there. (Both Cicero and the real Velleius were acquaintances of Phaedrus. See Diels [1879] 529ff. Cf. *EpF* xiii.1. §2, and *EpA* xiii.39. Cicero's verdict had a considerable afterlife (see Diels *ibid* 537n). E.g. Pierre Bayle took it up. [1737]. Vol. III, Ch. CVI, 333-336.

Just as the quote suggests, the greatest amount of Plato's theological material is to be found in the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*, especially book X of the latter (although there is relevant and often overlooked theological material in books IV, VII, and XII as well). This points to a second difficulty; these two dialogues belong to Plato's late stylistic period. The *Laws* allegedly was the work that Plato was still editing at the time of his death, while the *Timaeus*, along with its unfinished sister dialogue, the *Critias*, can be confidently identified as very late.⁴ Two other works with brief but concentrated and important information on Plato's theology also belong to the late period: the *Statesman*, especially its "Myth of Cronus" (269a-274e)⁵ and the *Philebus*, in particular its "Cosmological Section" (28c6-31a10).⁶ Unfortunately, the works of the late period are considerably more difficult, philologically and philosophically, than Plato's earlier dialogues. For this reason, and others besides, they have, at least in the 20th century received a relative dearth of scholarly attention; until relatively recently, this was doubly true for the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*.⁷

There is a silver lining to this cloud. With the exception of the *Philebus*, the philosophical protagonists and main speakers of the late dialogues are not Socrates, thus largely removing the Socratic Question from the long list of methodological challenges facing the comparativist project of reconstructing Platonic theology. The remaining two

⁴ See Chapter 2, below. The controversy over the *Timaeus*' dating is now basically settled. For background on the firm stylometric grounds for dating the *Timaeus* late, see: Cherniss [1965]; Branwood [1992]; Robinson [1992], [1995b]; Kahn [2002a]. The locus classicus of case for the *Timaeus* as a 'middle' dialogue is Owen [1965].

⁵ Discussed below in Chapter 6. For crucial discussions of the myth see: Robinson [1967], [1995b]; Mohr [1981]; Menn [1995]; Nightingale [1996]; Lisi [2004]; Kahn [2009].

⁶ Discussed briefly in Chapter 1 and at greater length in Chapter 5.

⁷ In antiquity and perhaps as late as the mid-early 19th c., the *Timaeus* was the flagship of the Platonic corpus. The *Laws* received considerable attention from Aristotle, though its importance waned in late antiquity among the Neo-Platonists who were comparatively apolitical, but cp. O'Meara [2003]. It did remain an important source for theology, though. See Dillon [2000b].

dialogues with considerable amounts of significant theological content, the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*, belong to Plato's middle stylistic period and do have Socrates as their main speaker. However, with their developed presentation of the theory of Forms and prominent discussions of the tripartite theory of the soul, they too leave comparatively little doubt that they represent Plato's own distinct viewpoint.

Even if we can find ways to justify and explain a unitarian method for reading middle and late Plato, it will make little difference if between the dialogues or even within one and the same dialogue there are irreconcilably different conceptions of the nature(s) of the gods. This is not an idle proposition but a very live problem. As Velleius points out, Plato refers to objects of greatly differing natures and ontological standings all as gods. Sometimes discusses the gods as having bodies (e.g. sun, the planets), at other times he specifies as the gods of the heavens only the soul(s) animating and moving the "divine" bodies of the heavens. Then again, Plato sometimes identifies as a god an intelligible being, something timeless and unchanging, unlike even souls. These can even include references to the Forms or some specific Form as gods or the godliest things.⁸

Given the relative ease and comfort with which a Pagan Greek can refer to something as a god (θεός - *theos*) or as divine (θειόν - *theion*), we might wonder if the problem with defining a theology in Plato's thought is not the inconsistency between those things he calls "god", but rather the promiscuous plurality of the kinds of things that he thinks or speaks of as being "gods".⁹ The proper response to both concerns is to carefully enumerate and distinguish the sorts of things that count for Plato as "gods", and then to see if sense can be made of why different things are "gods". Then, if there is some

⁸ See Hackforth [1936] 4 n.3.

⁹ Diès [1927] 555, Hackforth [1936] 4-5.

special sense of “God” that we care about, we may ask which if any of Plato’s types of “gods” are, properly speaking, “God(s)”. For instance, Hackforth, in one of the seminal 20th works on Plato’s theology writes:

What then shall be our criteria for deciding who, or what, if anything, is Plato's God in the sense in which the word is used by Theists? What is it, if anything, that makes Plato what we call a Theist ? I propose to answer this question very dogmatically : ‘God’ must (1) have independent, not derivative, existence, and (2) be the source, or cause, of all in the Universe that is good, orderly and rational, but not of what is bad, disorderly and irrational. For this second criterion I may appeal to the first of the *τύποι περὶ θεολογίας* in *Rep.* 379B-C, a principle which there is no reason to suppose that Plato ever abandoned. I do not of course suggest that these two criteria furnish a definition of God : they are no more than *ὄροι*, marks or criteria; but as such I hardly think they can be contested.¹⁰

This is certainly a sense of “God” that is of special interest to us, whose cultural legacy is as much Judaeo-Christian as it is Greco-Roman. More importantly, there may well be something in Plato’s system answering to such a description (and I believe that there is); but then again there may be other important kinds of “gods” who are, say derivative in their existence, contrary to (1), but are also (proximate) and necessary contributors to the good of the universe, even if they are not its ultimate, highest principle. For instance, the “God” in Hackforth’s sense may require proxies to carry out its goal of making the universe as good as possible. If Plato postulates such beings and understands them, too, to be “gods”, (and I believe that he does), then we cannot omit them from our account of his theology, even if they are not “God” in a more familiar, monotheistic or henotheistic sense.

What we must do, then, is present Plato’s theology as having different “levels” of divinities, and see if they form a hierarchy that is coherent. For Plato’s system may come

¹⁰ *ibid.* 5. By the “*τύποι περὶ θεολογίας* [tūpoi peri theologias] in *Rep.* 379B-C” Hackforth means the first of the general rules governing the content in the genre of stories dealing with the gods. That rule is that the gods are not the causes of all things, but, as they are completely good, they are only the causes of good things.

out as far more coherent when read “vertically” rather than “horizontally”. This leads me to the second noteworthy feature of interpretations of Platonic theology – its frequent division into distinct “hypostases”.

2. Hypostases and debates over how many Plato had

A number of philosophical schools in antiquity, primarily those with a Socratic pedigree, maintained both that the cosmos is designed and maintained by intelligence and that the world as a whole is alive and divine. However, their views of the relationship between the designing intelligence and the soul of the living world varied widely. The Stoics held a panentheist position: Zeus or God was identical with the active principle of the universe, a body that gives determination to all the matter in the cosmos. These determinations include the bodily integrity (hexis) of solids, the nature (physis) in plants, and the souls (psyche) of sensate and locomotive animals. God and his providential design are immanent in the world as the world-breath (πνεῦμα), which itself is a body. However, the Stoic god was intelligent, and his thoughts determined the fate of the world.

Not so for Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists. They sharply distinguished Intellect, which has true Being and exists at the level of Forms, from the world soul, which was itself superior to bodies though essential for ordering and sustaining them in the cosmos. While Plotinus identified the Demiurge or designer with Intellect, Intellect itself was not immanent in the world, except derivatively through the intelligence of the World-soul. However, the One stood above even Intellect and Being, generating them through its limitless emanations of power and goodness. If one were speak of ‘the God’ in a monotheistic fashion, then the Neo-Platonist god should be identified as the One, not Intellect. But the pagan Neo-Platonist are at most henotheists. They are ready, like Plato

himself, to call many things ‘god’ or ‘godly’. However, there are great, qualitative metaphysical differences between their levels of gods.

The Stoics and the Neo-Platonists agreed that there was a divine, immortal soul immanent throughout the entire natural world and directing its motions.¹¹ They disagreed over the corporeality of this soul, indeed of soul as such, but for the moment that is less important than this other difference: the Neo-Platonists also held that there are superior, transcendent divinities beyond the temporal, physical world in which the World-soul is engaged. The Stoics have only one fundamental, metaphysical level of divinity and it is materially immanent; the Neo-Platonists had three levels of divinity, their “three hypostases”, and at most only the lowest, the World-soul, was immanent in the physical cosmos. Following them, let us call such levels of immortal or divine being¹² and value that a philosopher posits “hypostases”.

Where does Plato fall on this issue? How many hypostases did he believe in, and which, if any were immanent in the cosmos, which transcendent? By answering these questions we identify who or what are Plato’s god(s). Plato endorses a cosmology where the gods are responsible for creating the cosmos and making it good both by designing and maintaining it well. By answering these questions we will become better acquainted with the distinct natures of the creator and the gods he creates. We will also see that there distinct senses of designing and maintaining, and that these roles are divided between the different levels of gods.

¹¹ The “entire” world, unless god does not enter the void. The cosmos, as τὸ πᾶν, was thoroughly pervaded by god, but τὸ ὅλον, which also includes the void, is only suffused with god in its non-void center. However, the Stoics identified the cosmos proper as the former, not the latter.

¹² I mean “being” here in the ontologically neutral sense that would incorporate becoming in time, the Being of the Forms or *Nous*, and the super-being of the One.

The position I will argue for is that Plato had two hypostases constituting his basic conception of the natures of the gods. The first and lower one is the World-soul in which cosmic intellect is instantiated and which is immanent in the spatiotemporal world of appearances. The second and higher god is the Demiurge who exists eternally as a transcendent, intelligible Form; indeed “he” is their pinnacle, the highest Form: the Form of the Good.

What do I mean when I say that the lower hypostasis is “immanent” and the higher one is “transcendent”? Plato, influenced heavily by Parmenides, drew a sharp divide between things which really are, and are intelligible, on the one hand, and on the other hand sensible objects, which in virtually every respect are and are not, but in fact only “become” or come-to-be. By “transcendent” I mean the state or mode of timeless existence ascribed by Plato to intelligible, unchanging beings such as the Forms. These ‘beings’ transcend the world of appearance, and are outside of space (χώρα) and time. Objects that do change because they are part of the spatiotemporal world, even if they are not directly sensible (e.g. the soul), are “immanent”. To what or in what are they immanent? They are immanent in space, meaning they find a place within the “receptacle” of the *Timaeus*, and they are party to motion, change, time, and in general *coming-to-be*, even if they are indestructible and have existed since the beginning of time (e.g. souls).

I have just mentioned the World-soul, the Demiurge, and the Form of the Good. These entities and “*Nous*” or “Intellect” are the three remaining features of the interpretation of Plato’s theology that I will now discuss.

3. Plato's Panpsychism and the World-soul as (a) god

All parties agree that Plato held that the cosmos as whole was alive, intelligent, and divine. Plato claims that there is a single soul that animates the entire sensible universe, gives it its flawless intelligence, and keeps it in harmonious motion for all time. His standard formulation for this entity is ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχή (*hē tou pantos psuchē*), literally “the soul of *the all*”, where “the all”- τὸ πᾶν (*to pān*) – means ‘the whole’, as in: *the whole* sensible world of becoming, i.e. this universe. In Latin it comes to be known as the “*anima mundi*”, and in modern languages as “die Allseele” or “die Weltseele”, “l’âme du monde”, “el alma del mundo”, and typically in English as “the World-soul”.¹³

The World-soul carries out several essential, cosmological functions, not the least of which are causing the inerrant motions of the heavens and helping individual souls to sustain and provide for the bodies of the plants and animals that they respectively animate. Plato is emphatic that either the cosmos as a whole – (the World-god) – or, at the very least, the World-soul is a god, and is chief among whatever number of gods (e.g. the stars or just their souls) and demigods (i.e. daemons or guardian-spirits) occupy the temporal world and animate the cosmos.¹⁴ Therefore, accounts of Plato’s theology almost

¹³ There is no standardized and uniform convention for the word’s capitalization and hyphenation. Since it is a proper noun that refers to a specific being, capitalization is common, albeit far from universal. A hyphen seems to me to be desirable for avoiding ambiguities, but capitalizing “soul” after the hyphen, which yields “World-Soul”, is unnecessary, and it strikes me as ungainly. Therefore, I have opted to render it “World-soul” throughout. When speaking of the cosmos as the body of the World-soul, I will sometimes refer to it, analogously, as the “World-body”. When I specifically mean to refer to the composite of the World-soul and the World-body, which in the *Timaeus*, at least, is “the created god”, I will use the term, “World-god”.

¹⁴ I say “occupy the temporal world” because, while Plotinus and certain Neo-Platonists try to suspend the soul between transcending the physical world and at least projecting a lower part of themselves into it, all agree that the soul partakes of change and is in time (or is created concomitantly with the creation of time).

always give considerable attention to the World-soul and accept it as one of Plato's gods / conceptions of the gods.¹⁵

Xenocrates, the first elected Scholarch of the Academy, who was Plato's student and second successor (after Plato's nephew Speusippus), pushed for a view in which the World-soul was the central and supreme deity. This was also the view of the astronomically oriented author of the *Epinomis* (the name given to the work by another hand that was appended to the end of Plato's last and unfinished work, the *Laws*, very soon after the master's death).¹⁶ This view was adapted into the theology of the Stoics, whose god was the active or determinant principle of the universe, who pervaded 'the all' as *pneuma* – breath – thus giving to the various parts of the world whatever order, life, and/or rationality that they might manifest.¹⁷ Perhaps it was in a similar spirit that even Theophrastus, Aristotle's student, colleague, and successor as the Scholarch of the Lyceum, argued for eliminating Aristotle's god, the "Unmoved Mover", in favor of simply a series of cosmic souls to move the celestial spheres.¹⁸

Despite its popularity among Plato's immediate successors and its influence upon several of their rivals, the view that the rational World-soul is the supreme god was not dominant in Middle Platonism¹⁹, and it was not even under serious consideration among the Neo-Platonists, all of whom postulated at least one and usually two levels of reality above the soul (viz. the eternal beings and intellects, the intelligible Forms and above the Forms the ineffable One, i.e. Form of the Good), with superior gods corresponding to

¹⁵ For special focus on various aspects of the World-soul see: Moreau [1939]; Reydam-Schils [1997]; Von Perger [1997]; Zedda [2000]; Karfik [2004]; Ferrari [2004].

¹⁶ The principal culprit, according to ancient testimony, is one Philip of Opus, Plato's student and secretary at the time of his death.

¹⁷ cf. Moreau [1939], Reydam-Schils [1999]; Sedley [2002], [2005], [2007]; Betegh [2003]; Long [2010].

¹⁸ See Lennox [1985b], Baltussen [2003].

¹⁹ e.g. Albinus *Did.* §§9-15. See Dillon [1977] on the theologies of: Eudorus 120-121, 126-128; Philo 155-65; Plutarch 199-202, 205-6, 209-210, 214-216; Albinus 281-285.

them. However, in the last century, the view that Plato's highest conception of god is the World-soul or the intellect in (that) soul has enjoyed a major resurgence and is now one of the two predominant interpretations of Plato's theology.

4. *The Demiurge as god, Intellect as divine, and the Demiurge as Intellect (ΔΝ)*

Fourth, all parties who believe that Plato had a theology recognize that obviously Intellect (νοῦς - *nous*) plays a key role within it. This has been so from the time of Plato's immediate successors onward. Today, when interpreters hold that there is some kind of god over and above the World-soul, they usually identify it as Intellect, understood not as a part, virtue, or type of cognition in the soul, but as one of the Forms, separate from and superior to souls. Furthermore almost all interpretations of all varieties identify intellect with the creator-god figure of the *Timaeus*, known as the Demiurge (δημιουργός - *dēmiourgos*). This fundamental interpretive commitment will be referred to as the “**Demiurge is *Nous***” or the “**Demiurge is Intellect**” thesis, and abbreviated, “**ΔΝ**” (Δημιουργός = Νοῦς - *Dēmiourgos* = *Nous*). Strictly speaking, there are distinct concepts of Intellect and the Demiurge at play in the debates over Plato's theology, even if they turn out to be one and the same being. However, I have placed them both in this subsection because of the high universal acceptance of ΔΝ. I myself will deny this claim, even though I identify the Demiurge as Plato's higher hypostasis. But to do so, I will first have to untangle the Demiurge from Intellect.

5. *The Form of the Good as God*

Lastly, the Form of the Good, also known as the One, has often been considered a candidate for the mantle of “God” within Plato's system.²⁰ Whereas it is (A) the cause of

²⁰ See Shorey [1895]; Zeller [1923]; Demos [1937]; Doherty [1956], [1961]; Gaiser [1980]; Miller, M. [1985]; Benitez [1995]; Enders [1999]; Isnardi Parente [2000]; Ferrari [2001].

whatever is good being good, and (B) responsible for both the *intelligibility* and *being* of all the other intelligible beings (Forms), including even the Form of Being, which it “subsists” above, it would seem the perfect answer to the two criteria Hackforth gives.

While the One/Good was the highest of the three levels of the Neo-Platonists and of central importance in their accounts of Platonic theology, treatments in the last century of the Form of the Good as god often have been relatively detached from discussions of the World-soul, Intellect, and the Demiurge.²¹ A dramatic example is Hackforth, who says, “I do not propose to raise here the much-discussed question of the relation of Plato's God to the Form of Good, or to the Forms in general.”²² In his concluding paragraph, he confesses that, “In declining to raise here the problem of the identity of God with the Form of Good I have of course declined the attempt to fit Plato's theology into his metaphysical system...”²³

Hackforth cites Taylor as his source for sequestering the Forms from the discussion of Plato's theology, and Archer-Hind's and Zeller's approaches to the question of Plato's god by way of his metaphysics were argued against forcefully by A.E. Taylor, whose work on the *Timaeus* was the launching point for English language scholarship on that work for the 20th century. It has been suggested that this led to a split between two different methodological approaches to Plato's theology, one “cosmological”, which is predominant in Anglophone scholarship, and another “metaphysical” one, more common in French and German scholarship. However this came about, I hope to strike a blow against this rather artificial bifurcation, by defending the view that the Demiurge is the

²¹ Cf. Hampton [1990] and especially Benitez [1995], who gives numerous examples of how interpreters have spoken of the Good as god, without relating it to the Demiurge (e.g. Eduard Zeller) and vice-versa. In support of Benitez [1995] see McPherran [2009].

²² [1936] 8.

²³ *ibid* 9.

same as the Form of the Good. That is to say that I hope to show that Plato's cosmology fits neatly into his late metaphysics, and that his theology is that which connects the two or, rather, is what constitutes that which is common between them.

§III. The Positions to be defended in this dissertation

The major interpretive claims of this dissertation can be stated in terms of these five tropes. Plato's theology is coherent, but it has two distinct levels, an immanent one in which the intellect-possessing World-soul arranges, moves, and manages the bodies and souls within the cosmos, and a transcendent one, wherein the Demiurge/Form of the Good is responsible for the creation of the World-soul and other gods and for the basic mathematical order that makes souls and the elemental parts of bodies possible.

This dissertation articulates and argues for the radical position that the Demiurge is not intellect or reason (*nous*) but is an intelligible being. A survey of the various interpretations from antiquity to the present suffices to show how heterodox this interpretation is, for, while these views have shown disagreement over nearly every other point, the "Demiurge is *Nous*" has been shared by close to all for over two millennia. It is typically assumed, rarely argued for, and all but universally accepted. The full significance of my rejection of the thesis can only be appreciated by seeing how its removal obviates several gripping and otherwise insurmountable dilemmas faced by all the major interpretations, while its denial can only be made with confidence if founded on meticulous textual exegesis.

In chapter 5 I present the various interpretations of Plato's theology that have been defended in the last century and show that each can only consistently maintain two

of three basic claims, all of which are necessary for an adequate interpretation of the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* and Plato's theology more broadly. They are:

1. For Plato intellect (νοῦς) always is immanent in a soul. (Inherence of Intellect)
2. The *Timaeus* shows us that the World-soul and the Demiurge are separate, in as much as the Demiurge creates the World-soul. (Distinctness of Demiurge and Soul)
3. The World-soul is the eldest or most prior of all things that come-to-be, thus there is no other soul before it. (Venerability of the World-soul)

These three propositions, taken on their own are not jointly inconsistent. However, if the ΔN principle, i.e. that the Demiurge is *Nous*, is added to them, then at least one must be jettisoned for the sake of coherence. The three main interpretive camps of Plato's theology in the 20th and now early 21st century can be distinguished in terms of which two propositions they keep, and which they one they must at least tacitly give up on:

α . Those who identify the Demiurge with a transcendent, superanimate intellect, and thus accept 2 and 3 but reject 1. It is the view of Hackforth, Mohr, Menn, Zeyl, and Karfik.

It was also the interpretation of ancient middle Platonists and Neo-Platonists, e.g. Albinus, Plotinus, Proclus (although they placed the One/the Good above this intellect).

β . Those who maintain 1 and 3 but reject 2. Thus they either identify the Demiurge with the World-soul (Cornford, Skemp, Carone); or with the intellect of the World-soul (Theiler, Frutiger, Festugière); or with the intellect of all rational souls including the World-soul (Cherniss, Dillon). All tend to favor 'non-literal' readings of the *Timaeus*.

γ . Those who identify the Demiurge as a soul distinct from and prior to the World-soul, i.e. an "Ur-Soul". They accept 1 and 2 but reject 3. They include Taylor, Vlastos, Robinson, and Mason. They tend to prefer more 'literal' readings of the *Timaeus*.

Table 1: Leading Interpretations of the Demiurge

Interpretive Group	Accept	Reject	Leading Representatives
α . Demiurge = Transcendent Nous	2, 3	1	Hackforth, Mohr, Menn, Perl, Zeyl, Karfik, Gerson
β . Demiurge = [Nous of] World-/All Soul (See also Table 5 below).	1, 3	2	-Cherniss, Dillon; -Cornford, Skemp, Carone; -Theiler, Frutiger, Festugière
γ . Demiurge = Ur-soul	1, 2	3	Taylor, Vlastos, Robinson, Mason

The first position maintains that the Demiurge is a kind of transcendent intellect that exists apart from any soul or the world of change, while the second and third interpretations agree that the Demiurge, as a Platonic god, must be a soul or at least the intelligence(s) immanent within souls. Thus the major modern interpretations can also be characterized into two rather than three opposing camps, both of which accept ΔN and then maintain one of the following two theses:

1'. For Plato intellect ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) always is immanent in a soul. (Inherence of Intellect)

2'. The Demiurge is an intelligible being (Transcendence of the Demiurge)

Therefore, the positions that emerge are distinguished by their understandings of Plato's metaphysical commitments with respect to intellect ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$):

\aleph . '*Noöntic Transcendentalist*': Those who recognize intellect as occupying a superior ontological stratum than soul, thus abandoning 1'.

α' . They also subscribe to the ΔN ($\aleph + \Delta N$), so they identify the Demiurge with transcendent, intelligible form of intellect, thus accepting 2'.

\beth . '*Noöntic Immanentist*': Those who recognize no intellect over and above those inherent in souls. They accept 1'.

β' . They also subscribe to the ΔN ($\beth + \Delta N$); accordingly they identify the Demiurge with soul or with the immanent intellect inhering in soul(s), thus rejecting 2'.

The α class of views belong to the \aleph class of Noöntic Immanentist and, more specifically, the α' subclass. The $\beta(1-3)$ and γ views belong to the \beth class of Noöntic Immanentist and, more specifically, its β' subclass. The first of these positions, α' , was the overwhelmingly dominant view maintained by Platonists and Neo-Platonists from antiquity through the Renaissance. The second view, β' , has been the dominant, though not unopposed, perspective of 20th century interpretations, although at the dawn of the 21st century the α' view seems ascendant.

Such views also distinguish themselves simply in terms of the number of hypostases that they posit for Plato's theology. The \aleph type Noöntic Transcendentalists identify at least two hypostases, for in addition to an immanent hypostasis, they have at least one transcendent hypostasis. I classify views positing to Plato at least one transcendent god/hypostasis: '[generically] Transcendentalist'. My own interpretation is generically Transcendentalist, insofar as it attributes to Plato's system a transcendent god/hypostasis over and above the immanent kind of gods; however, my view is not a *Noöntic* Transcendentalist one, for I deny that any kind of nous is transcendent or is [part of] the transcendent god/hypostasis. The \beth type only have one immanent hypostasis, thus the \beth type views also belong to class of interpretations that one could call, '[generically] Immanentist'. My interpretation is a Noöntic Immanentist one, as I take nous to always be immanent (in a soul) for Plato. However, my view is not Immanentist *simpliciter*, as I understand Plato to endorse a transcendent god/hypostasis.

My own interpretation rejects both of the major options: α' and β' ; rather it takes the best parts of each, thesis 1' and thesis 2', and combines them in a way that is entirely consistent precisely because the identification of the Demiurge with Nous ($\Delta\mathbf{N}$) is

rejected. If one rejects ΔN then it becomes simple to see how on the one hand the Demiurge can be an intelligible being like the Forms (2b), even though Plato is quite clear and insistent that intellect (*nous* - νοῦς) can only occur in souls (1b), while souls are changing things and thus metaphysically inferior to the intelligible Forms. So, again, I will argue that Plato has two hypostases. One is the Soul in which Intellect is located, and it is in the World-soul and the souls of heavenly bodies that intellect constitutes the first type of Platonic god. I stress, however, that intellect is found exclusively at the level of souls.

3. Identification of the Demiurge with the Form of the Good

The other, higher divine hypostasis is represented in mythic guise as the Demiurge; I will argue that there are strong reasons to believe that the Demiurge is an anthropomorphic representation of the Form of the Good. The Form of the Good, which is “beyond being” (*R.* 509b7-10), is the One of the unwritten doctrines, in this capacity it is the ultimate source of order, harmony, and limitation or definition both for the Forms and what is below them. So understood, we can see clearly why the creative functions of the Demiurge are carried out in the *Timaeus* by his introduction of mathematics into the world.

4. Central Theses to be defended

Summarizing the above (and adding some specifics about my view of the Demiurge), I will argue for the following claims in this dissertation:

1. Intellect is always found in a soul. (**The ‘Inherence of Intellect’**). The Intellect that is said to order the cosmos is the intelligence of the World-soul. Since souls

are immanent in the spatiotemporal world, it follows that Intellect is always immanent.

2. Plato does not identify the Demiurge as an intellect, but rather as an intelligible object. Plotinus was right in thinking that for Plato the Demiurge is at the level of the Forms, but he was wrong in saying that Intellect was the same as the Demiurge.²⁴ (**Rejection of ΔN Thesis**)
3. Given claim (1) and the fact that soul has an ontological status inferior to real Being, Intellect/World-soul cannot be Plato's only hypostasis. For metaphysical and theological reasons he needs a higher hypostasis, even though the World-soul and other divine souls play an indispensable role in his cosmology. Thus, Plato has (at least) two hypostases, two ontologically distinct and hierarchically stratified kinds of god. In addition to the World-soul (and other cosmic souls), which is immanent in the cosmos, he also posits a transcendent god in the intelligible realm. (**Transcendentalism or Two-tiered Theology**)
4. Given (2) and (3) the Demiurge can neither be reduced to the World-soul and/or Intellect nor explained away as a mere literary conceit of Plato's creation myths.
5. The Demiurge is to be identified as (an anthropomorphic representation of) the Form of the Good, as presented in *Republic* VI. The Good, also known as the One, is the ultimate source of unity and thus limit or mathematical order, and this matches the Demiurge's modus operandi of creating the cosmos in the *Timaeus*, i.e. introducing mathematics into the world to give it its basic psychic and corporeal structures (arithmetical numbers or ratios and geometrical schemata).

²⁴ *Enn.* IV.4.10, V.1.8.

6. The Demiurge and his model are not identical. In the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge looks to a model to design the world, and he makes the world as good as possible by making it like its model and by making it like himself. However, he is not to be identified with the very model that he looks at. He is the best of intelligible things and the model is intelligible, but it is not the best intelligible thing, although it is the best intelligible Form to pose as a model for a world that will be *spatial* and have change. The Demiurge is the Form of the Good, but the model is the Form of the Living Being. I point to testimonial evidence in Aristotle that the Form of the Living-being is the spatial schematization of the Form of the Good, i.e. it is the idea of the Good as instantiated in three dimensions.
7. By having a two-tier system where the World-soul knows the Good through its intelligence and then makes and maintains the cosmos in a form resembling that hypostasis, Plato has an account of how goodness can pervade and hold together the world. This both gives the Form of the Good or the Demiurge a central role in structuring the world, but it does not require the Form of the Good to be immanent in nature or to “descend”.

§IV. Outline of the Dissertation by Chapter

I begin in Chapters 1-3 with the World-soul. Chapter 1 presents crucial background material on Plato’s intentions for cosmology in the *Phaedo*, his definition of the soul as a principle of self-motion in the *Phaedrus*, and the briefest of introductions to the theory of the World-soul in the *Philebus*. Specifically, it will just give an indication of what the World-soul is said to do in the *Philebus*. While earlier theological systems had introduced νοῦς (intellect) at the cosmic level or had presented the idea that the gods

create and *maintain* the world, they had not made use of ψυχή (soul) to explain the operations of intellect, to characterize the gods, or to develop their cosmologies. I show how Plato develops and his theory of cosmic souls, in particular the World-soul, in the *Timaeus* in Chapter 2, then in *Laws* X in Chapter 3.

I then discuss intellect and its relationship to souls in chapter 4. I argue for a strict interpretation of the ‘Inherence of Intellect’ principle, i.e. the claim that there is no intellect that is not instantiated in some soul, and soul is not transcendent, hence there is no such thing as a transcendent intellect for Plato. I discuss the texts where Plato endorses the inherence principle, and then debunk the interpretations of several passages that are taken to imply the existence of transcendent *nous*. Based on my conclusions in chapter 4, I show in chapter 5 why the Demiurge cannot be the same as intellect (viz. the **ΔN** thesis). Thereby I show why the currently dominant interpretive positions that identify the Demiurge either with a transcendent intellect or with immanent, divine souls (especially the World-soul) are incorrect, for they base their conclusions on the “**Demiurge is *Nous***” thesis. On the upside, the fatal limitations of these interpretations can be swiftly overcome provided that one rejects the **ΔN** thesis.

In chapter 6, I argue that Plato has a transcendent god/hypostasis represented by the mythical figure of the Demiurge. I argue that the Demiurge is best understood as an anthropomorphic representation or symbol of the Form of the Good. I focus on the *Timaeus* to do so, and then corroborate this interpretation by reference to the myth of Cronus in the *Statesman*, and several passages in the *Republic*. I end the chapter by discussing and responding to some possible objections to my position, and then the outlining the more significant implications of Plato’s transcendent theology, as I have

interpreted it, for his late philosophical thought, especially his metaphysics and cosmology.

PART ONE – PLATO’S IMMANENT THEOLOGY

Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Doctrine of the World-soul

§I. Introduction to the investigation of Immanent Theology and the World-soul

1. The subject of the World-soul

Whether Plato posited any higher hypostases outside of space and time and recognized them as god(s), are questions for the final chapters on *nous* and the Demiurge (5 and 6). In this chapter and the following two, the World-soul and the other godly souls who move heavenly bodies are examined in order to characterize Plato’s account of the gods who are responsible for maintaining the cosmos’ order and who are found within the spatiotemporal universe. That is to say that we are now considering his immanent theology.

As Skemp pointed out two generations ago, Plato’s metaphysics is not exhausted with the theory of Forms. Soul plays an indispensable and separate role in his ontology and cosmology, especially as the principle of life and motion. Although the theory of soul and psychic motion remains relatively understudied in comparison to the theory of Forms, there is now a real appreciation for Plato’s psychology as a distinct facet of his ontology and cosmology –not just his ethics- in no small part due to the work of Cornford and Skemp.²⁵ There have been a few studies of the World-soul or dealing considerably with the World-soul in recent years, particularly in German Platonic scholarship, and some have been quite extensive.²⁶

²⁵ Skemp ixff.; Menn [1995] 67 n2. Despite this insight, Skemp regarded the Demiurge as a fictional representation of the World-soul. See chapter 5.

²⁶ von Perger [1997] and Karfik [2004] are two very important contributions in this regard. (Also relevant is the forthcoming dissertation on Plato’s late conception of soul by Brian Prince, Rice University).

Chapters 1-3's study is one of very few that gives a focused and integrated account of the World-soul across the all the dialogues in which it appears and, even more distinctly, approaches it not merely as central to Plato's cosmology but also as an issue of *theology* and a part of the enriched *ontology* of the late dialogues.²⁷ What will not be assumed is that the World-soul (or other divine souls) exhausts the sphere of the divine for Plato. Just as we should not assume that the theory of Forms or Being/Becoming dualism exhaust Plato's ontology, so we also should not too hastily claim that his theory of the World-soul exhausts his theology. However, it is best to begin with this aspect of his theology and to treat of it exclusively for the moment. We will not take on the Demiurge directly, although in the next chapter on the World-soul in the *Timaeus* it will be impossible to ignore the Demiurge, since he creates the World-soul.

2. *Basic, Non-Cosmological Characteristics of Soul in earlier works*

To understand the World-soul in Plato's late dialogues, we must comprehend Plato's views about soul more generally, particularly its nature as an indestructible, non-sensible thing which is a source of its own motion and the motion of others. So, which of the claims about the nature of the soul found in earlier dialogues are still operative in the *Philebus* and *Laws X*? We know several things that the soul definitely is not: it is not breath, nor is it any kind of body at all, nor is it a harmony of the body. The *Phaedo* argues that the soul is more like the Forms than bodies, for it is not directly perceptible by the senses, and must be grasped by intellect like the Forms. This does not change, as in the *Laws* the Athenian can safely state without further elaboration or proof that,

²⁷Again, Karfik 2004 is a welcome exception. A critical notice of the book is given by Johansen in *Rhizai*'s special issue on the *Timaeus*: "Cosmology and Psychology in the *Timaeus*" *Rhizai* 2 (2005) 271-8. As theology and ontology, the World-soul in the *Timaeus* and *Laws* is given rich discussion in Dillon's *Heirs of Plato*. See also Carone [2005], Mayhew [2008] and Jirsa [2008] on the gods in *Laws X*.

“Everyone can see the soul’s body, but nobody its soul; nor [do they see] the soul of any other body, neither that of a living creature nor of a dead one. Yet we have much hope that the whole of this class, though imperceptible to all the body’s inborn senses, is intelligible by reason alone (898d-e).”

From the final argument for the soul’s indestructibility in the *Phaedo*, we learn that while the soul is not Life-itself, it is a per-se cause or bringer of life insofar as one can call such property-bearing “causation”.²⁸ Fire is not Hot-itself, but it does always bring heat with it, and so long as it is aflame it is hot. No fire will ever be not-hot nor a cause for anything else becoming not hot. In the same way, soul is non-accidentally or per-se related to life: whenever it is present life is present too, and whatever has/(is?) soul can be said to be alive. Now it may be fallacious to infer thereby that any soul will never be destroyed; what can be concluded is that no soul is not alive, but not that no soul can ever be destroyed. For if a soul were to become a non-soul it could and would be something dead.²⁹ And Socrates does suggest that he anticipates worry on some of the argument’s formalities. (And Plato does go on to give new arguments for immortality in *Republic* X and the *Phaedrus*). All the same, what matters is what sort of thing the *Phaedo*’s final argument is trying to show the soul to be. It is presenting the soul as

²⁸ I refer to Plato’s doubts in Socrates’ intellectual autobiography wherein he describes explanation of natural phenomena in terms of the Forms rather than in terms of the providence of Intellect as a “runner-up” at *Phd.* 99d.

²⁹ By this logic one could argue that no employee could ever become unemployed. If someone is an employee, then he must be under someone’s employ, thus he must have a job (or be employed). If he were to be unemployed then he would not have a job, but then he would not be an employee. This argument would destroy any essential change or corruption. No subject could remain itself while losing an essential or per-se attribute, and thus it, as that subject, could not cease to have that attribute; but it, as an existing object or a mere subject of thought and speech, could lose its essence. The distinction needed to avoid the fallacy is that between a secondary substance where subject implies a specific form, from the idea of a mere subject or ὑποκείμενον (*hupokeimenon*) or from a given entity τόδε τι (*tode ti*) which can cease to be what (sort of thing) it is, but cannot cease to be absolutely. In this way one can avoid a conflation between logical implication (which is timeless) and actual, causal connection.

something that at all times is generating life for itself and whatever body it inhabits. The definition of it as a self-mover in the *Phaedrus* is a development of this same view from Socrates last argument for the soul's indestructibility.³⁰

3. The "Implementation Problem" in the Anaxagoras Passage of the *Phaedo*

Three other, more cosmological themes relating to the soul need also be briefly recapitulated before turning to the *Philebus*. The *Cratylus*' etymology of "ψυχή" (*psuchē*) suggests that soul is responsible, in some way, for nature. For "ψυχή" (*psuchē*) turns out to be a corruption of "φύσεχει" (*phusechei*), itself a contraction of "φύσιν ἔχει(ν)" (*phusin echei(n)*), meaning (to) hold or possess nature. Call this theme the 'Care of Soul for Nature', or 'for the Cosmos'. In the *Gorgias* (), the section of the *Phaedo* on Anaxagoras, and parts of the *Cratylus*, the idea has been suggested that Intellect, Justice and/or some other virtue is responsible for ruling, holding together, and/or moving the heavens (400a). Call this theme, the rule of virtue in the cosmos, Cosmic "Dikaiocracy." Those passages do not directly associate such virtues and forms of knowledge with any sort of soul that must possess them. Once Plato locates intellect in a divine soul these two ideas will coalesce into one single thesis, but that remains for his introduction of the World-soul in the late dialogues.

In the Presocratic and Socratic philosophical theologies that antecede Plato's there were numerous accounts of a cosmos spanning divinity that was itself intellect/mind (*nous*: νοῦς) or reason (*phronēsis*: φρόνησις; or *logos*: λόγος). Plato was dissatisfied with these theological cosmologies and was interested in formulating an alternative to

³⁰ This connection was first identified by Bury [1886]. He was enthusiastically followed by Skemp [1942] 5-10 and Hackforth [1952] 68 n.2, so also Frutiger [1930] 138 n.1. Bury went farther than us in saying that this was the (whole) solution to the problems of cosmology in the *Phaedo*, "The category of αὐτοκινησία (τὸ αὐτὸ κινεῖν) is the solution Plato has discovered for the difficulty which exercised him as to etiology when he was studying Anaxagoras." (84), but Bury's main point is nigh certain.

them that would do several crucial things that they could not. The deficits that he specifies and plans to fill in the *Phaedo* are:

- 1) Giving a non-mechanistic, teleological account of the cosmos and its important features
- 2) Showing how goodness is imminently constitutive of the cosmos' order, including:
- 3) Explaining the cosmological role of intellect (neither mechanistically nor physically).

Pace Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia, Plato wants an account of cosmic *nous* that does not reduce to the mechanical motions of physical elements,³¹ and pace Xenophon (or Antisthenes) Plato wants a theological, teleological cosmology only if it really is cosmology, i.e. only if it actually explains how the god(s) give the world a rational design so as to refute the mechanical naturalism that gives rise to atheism.³² In either case, Plato is seeking a theory that can explain how intellect/reason works in the world. I will call this the 'Implementation of Intellect Problem', or the 'Implementation Problem', for short.

Socrates' final attempt to demonstrate the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo* turns on account of causation. He argues that just as the X can never be not-X, so too the *per se* cause of X will never be not-X or could never be made not-X. Thus the soul, the *per se* cause of life, could never come to be not-living or dead. This is an account of causation in terms of Forms and what can partake of what. This account of causation is not an optimal one, though. It is a second-best or runner up (δεύτερος πλοῦς) to the best account of causation, a teleological one (99d). Socrates makes due with a "formal" argument for the soul's immortality, but only after telling the reader about his thwarted

³¹ See Menn [1995] 34-42.

³² For background on Socratic theology and its milieu see: Beckman [1979]; Vander Waerdt [1994]; McPherran [1996]; Janko [1997], [2006]; Kahn [1997a]; Viano [2001]; Sedley [2002], [2005], [2007].

aspirations to learn the better way. Specifically, he tells us that in his youth he heard that Anaxagoras had purported to give an account of the cosmos in which *Nous* was the primary agent of its coming to be.

Thrilled that he might hear how the cosmos came to be as the product of intelligence (*nous* νοῦς), Socrates quickly acquired and read Anaxagoras' books. Disillusionment soon followed. Socrates had not only hoped that in Anaxagoras' system νοῦς would be the only cause (*aition* - αἴτιον) but also because Intellect is cause of all, any explanation (*aitia* - αἰτία) of natural phenomena he gave would be in terms of what is best. Whatever the relationship is between the terms "αἴτιον" and "αἰτία" and the degree to which they correlate to our concepts of [cause] and [explanation] respectively,³³ Socrates was hoping for and was ready to agree with two *separate* claims in his wished-for Anaxagorean system:

- 1) Intelligence is the orderer and cause (αἴτιον) of all things [97c1-2].
- 2) An explanation (αἰτία) or the investigation of why something is so in a cosmology that accepts (1) will be in terms *only* of what is for the best [97c6-d4].³⁴

Now (2) does immediately follow from (1), although Socrates takes the first to imply the second when he says, "I never thought that he [Anaxagoras], *having said that those things are ordered by Intellect*, would bring in any other explanation (αἰτίαν) for them than that it was best that these things be that way." Anaxagoras' alleged commitment to rule by a cosmic intellect is why he is not expected to offer explanations other than that

³³ Frede [1980].

³⁴ "εἰ οὖν τις βούλοιο τὴν αἰτίαν εὑρεῖν περὶ ἐκάστου ὅπῃ γίγνεται ἢ ἀπόλλυται ἢ ἔστι, τοῦτο δεῖν περὶ αὐτοῦ εὑρεῖν, ὅπῃ βέλτιστον αὐτῷ ἔστιν ἢ εἶναι ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν πάσχειν ἢ ποιεῖν· ἐκ δὲ δὴ τοῦ λόγου τούτου οὐδὲν ἄλλο σκοπεῖν προσήκειν ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἄλλ' ἢ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον." The exclusivity of 'only' is guaranteed by "οὐδὲν ἄλλο" at 97d2. cf. Socrates' claim that he would be sufficed with such explanations alone and would desire no other sort at 98a1-2. The exclusivity is further confirmed by his claim at 98a-7 that he never thought that Anaxagoras would appeal *any other* sort of explanation (αἰτίαν) than those in terms of what is for the best.

things are for the best. There is something of a minor premise to bridge the two points, though. Socrates claims that he had thought, “that if this were so [i.e. that Intellect is the orderer and cause of everything], then the ordering intellect would order everything and establish each thing in the manner that would be best (97c4-6).”

We should not be surprised that Socrates would think that Intellect would make things for the best. He had already said earlier in the dialogue that reason (φρόνησις) is the only currency in which good is exchanged (69c).³⁵ While νοῦς is far more reified than the virtue of φρόνησις the connection between reason and value is not questioned. We might similarly point to passages in the *Philebus* where it is assumed that νοῦς as such is divine (28a-b), although a *human* life might not be as well suited to pure contemplation as a divinity (33b).

Let us give some further specificity to the relationship between Intellect (*nous* νοῦς) as cause/responsible thing (*aitios* αἴτιος) and the best and most excellent (*to ariston kai to beltiston* τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον) as explanans (*aitía* αἰτία). Lennox aptly formulates the principle bridging Intellect to the Best as: “If intelligence bestows a certain order on something, that thing has that order *because* its having that order is best.”³⁶ Lennox elaborates by claiming that Plato, like Aristotle, thinks that good or well-ordered states of affairs do not come about *qua good* by chance.³⁷ Both think something good comes about *because* it is good only by some specific agency. Where they differ, evidently, is in whether this causal agent must be deliberate, intentional, or – in a word –

³⁵ At *Cratylus* 417b7-d8 a complicated etymology of *kalon* - καλόν is used to make the case that “καλόν” (fine/noble/beautiful) is the proper name for *phronēsis* - φρόνησις ([practical] reason), treated in parallel with *dianoia* - διάνοια (thought) and *nous* - νοῦς (intellect). Similarly at *Meno* 88c8ff. it is only the close relative of νοῦς, φρόνησις, that makes something good; and it is only its opposite, folly, which makes something bad.

³⁶ Lennox [2001] 282.

³⁷ Aristotle *Protr.* fr. 10.

intelligent. Aristotle thinks that in the case of nature the good for a natural being is brought about because it is that being's good, but without intention or deliberation being required (*Phys.* II.8). Like nature, human artifice also brings about good or well-ordered states of affairs *because* they are good or well-ordered, but artifice does so intentionally, with planning.

Plato's view is that the good comes about because it is the good only in the case of intentional actions. Artifice is the only alternative to chance and spontaneity, which are not only treated equivalently, but are lumped together by Plato with "Nature" (*Soph.* 265c7-9, *L.* 889b1-5). Hence his quintessential notion of an agent – something that makes a certain kind of result *per se*, is a craftsman.

Lennox and Sedley rightly note that in this passage 'material causation' (which here includes what in a modern sense we might call efficient cause) is ruled out from being a real explanation or causal agency because it underdetermines the states of affairs that are its explananda. How can blood and bone account for why Socrates is sitting in an Athenian prison awaiting death, when his bones and flesh could have just as naturally escaped to freedom (*Phd.* 98d6-99a4). Likewise, if combinations of elements randomly brought about the heavens or complex organisms then they might have formed very different organisms and a very different cosmos or no life or cosmos at all. Hence the elements do not bring about this cosmos *per se* or necessarily. The key idea seems to be that if A could just as well bring about not-B as B, then A is not the true cause or maker of B. This view is more plausible if αἰτία ("responsibility", explanation), in Plato's cosmology as in Greek legal contexts, is determined retrospectively, i.e. if the main point of scientific explanation is to assign responsibility to a state of affairs that is already

known to be the case, rather than the making of novel predictions. For instance, it is *the case* that the Earth is round and at the center of the cosmos; why is that? Is it really because of the motion of water, and air, and aether? These could also have formed a flat world that is not in the center, that moves erratically, etc. So how are these any explanation of why the earth *is round and centered*? For the most part Plato's cosmology is a system of explanations for why the world is the way astronomers et al. have described it. To our modern, post-Newtonian ears that may seem strange. Collisions between bodies could result in any number of different results for them, but necessity is guaranteed through laws, and the necessity of *this* or *that particular result* comes from the specification of initial conditions into these laws' variables. All the same, we cannot blame Plato for failing to anticipate Galileo. A fairer objection would be to claim that Plato could have and should have turned to natural, non-deliberative teleological explanations of order like Aristotle.

Anaxagoras' cosmology did not explain Nous as ordering the world so as to be the best; rather, it took Nous to be just one more natural factor, albeit the only one that to some degree remains unmixed from all others, that sorted out the mixture of pre-creation through vortices (*Phd.* 98b7-c2).³⁸ Phaedo's Socrates, for the reasons discussed above, found such an account thoroughly unexplanatory. In particular, it took non-Intelligent things, specifically the physical elements and Nous (which he understood more as a force like Empedocles' Love and strife than as a guiding intelligence) to be the causes (αἴτια), and their physical activities of separating and recombining to be the explanations of living things and the heavens. Plato has not said that there is no point to speaking of

³⁸ For a classic treatment of Anaxagoras on Nous see Von Fritz [1964]; cp. the recent discussion in Curd [2007]. See also Vlastos [1950].

physical mechanisms – causes could not act as causes except *through* such mechanisms. However, such physical processes are not explanations or causes. In the *Timaeus* Plato does speak of certain physical processes, e.g. the way the gods formed the human body, but explains them in terms of purposes. For instance, our heads are round with thin bone and flesh to better allow for reasoning (44d3-6, 75b2-c7), for rational motion is circular as souls move and are spatial in Plato.³⁹ We stand upright to better look above us to the stars and thereby, with the gift of sight, be led back to the truth by contemplating the perfect motions of the heavens (46e7-47c4, 90a2-b1).⁴⁰ The latter, incidentally, is a teleological explanation that we also find in the mouth of Socrates in Xenophon (*Mem.* I.iv.11).⁴¹

Although only intelligences can properly be called causes of what goes on in nature since they are the only sort of thing that Plato thinks can explain the coming about of some good result *per se*, i.e. only they can explain why the world should be this way rather than otherwise, physical bodies do play a role. They are necessary conditions for intelligences to bring about their ends. More specifically, they are the material conditions in which and with which such ends are realized. Socrates uses the example of his own flesh and bones to illustrate the distinction between causes and necessary (material) conditions without which those causes could not operate. Treated in the way Anaxagoras explains nature, Socrates' sitting in his cell would be explained by reference to the bones and sinews in his limbs (*Phd.* 98c3-d6). He is sitting because his limbs are disposed in some way and not another. But of course this fails to tell us why his limbs are so

³⁹ cf. Lee [1976]; Johansen [2000].

⁴⁰ see Carone [1997], Gregoric [2005]. Cf. Kung [1989], Burnyeat [2000], Gill [2004]. cp. Barker [2000], Steel [2001].

⁴¹ Cf. Viano [2001]; Sedley [2007].

disposed. Qua bone and qua sinew Socrates could just as well be strolling around as a free man in Boeotia as he could be sitting in Athens as a prisoner. (Notice that no mention is made of the lawful activity of these physical parts– i.e. the bone is where it is because of the motion of a joint which contracted because of a signal from a nerve which in turn was activated because of the motion of body X and so on.)

However, Socrates could not be sitting in his cell or anywhere else unless he had legs with joints that can bend and muscles that can move and in turn be supported by his bones. Yet Socrates warns us about carelessly confusing this auxiliary role with (causal) responsibility itself. “Imagine not being able to distinguish the real cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as cause (99b2-4).” The cumbersome ‘that without which the cause would not be able to act as cause’ (ἐκεῖνο ἄνευ οὗ τὸ αἴτιον οὐκ ἂν ποτ’ εἴη αἴτιον) is given its own technical term in the *Timaeus*. There they are called ‘συναίτια’ (*sunaitia*) or ‘auxiliary causes’ (*Tim.* 46c7-d3).⁴²

The term first occurs in Plato at *Gorgias* 519b2 where it has the unremarkable sense of ‘accessory’ to a crime (in contrast to the true perpetrator) (*Grg.* 467c7, d2, e6). It occurs with the same legal sense in the *Laws* as well (936d1). But it has a special philosophical sense in the *Statesman*, where the visitor tells the younger Socrates that there are two sorts of expertise (τέχνη), the auxiliary cause of coming-to-be and that which is itself a cause. The crafts that produce the tools with which posterior crafts create their products are said to be συναίτια to the final products, e.g. the craft of woodwork is συναίτιον to clothing since it is needed to build the looms through which clothes are woven (281c4ff).

⁴² Cf. Casertano [2003].

The ‘supporting’ arts are described thusly: “Those which do not make the thing itself, but which provide tools for those that do- tools which, if they were not present, what has been assigned to each expertise would never be accomplished: these are what I mean by contributory causes [συναίτιους], while those that bring about the thing itself to completion are causes [αἰτίας] (281e1-5).” With respect to “weaving”, those arts that look after and make the garments themselves are the causes. Those that make and maintain the shuttles and such are auxiliary causes (281e7-10).

The cause/auxiliary cause distinction is essentially the same here, albeit extended a bit metaphorically so as to apply to crafts. It would be an identical sense of ‘auxiliary cause’ which referred to the shuttle and woof as auxiliary causes of weaving or garments, but by extension one can likewise say that the building of shuttles is an auxiliary cause for weaving since the former is necessary for the latter in virtue of the needed materials the former furnishes and which the latter needs to realize its ends.

In the *Timaeus* the treatment of συναίτιον v. αἴτιον precisely matches the contrast between materials and intelligences in the *Phaedo*. Having “explained” how reflected images come about through fire and smooth surfaces, Timaeus says, “Now all of these [fire, smooth surfaces, etc.] are among the auxiliary causes employed in the service of the god to realize the form of the most good to the extent that it is possible. They are believed by most people not to be auxiliary causes but causes of everything because they cool and heat and condense and disperse and make [all] those sorts of things (46c7-d3).” Obviously Presocratic naturalists are being criticized here, condensation and rarefaction are the activities to which or *because of which* air is the cause, according to Anaximenes.

Such materials, however, are never properly regarded as causes. As in the *Phaedo*, intelligence or, rather, being akin to intellect⁴³, is the mark of true causes.

Timaeus continues,

“Things of this kind cannot possibly have any reason (λόγον) or any intellect (νοῦν). Out of everything, soul must be called the only thing in which intellect can properly reside. And this is invisible, whereas fire and water and earth and air have all come to be as visible bodies. The lover of intellect (νοῦ) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμης) must necessarily pursue the causes of an intelligent nature as primaries, but [only] secondarily such things as are moved by others and that set other things in motion from necessity (46d4-e2).”

We see then that the *Timaeus* closely follows the dicta of the *Phaedo*’s Anaxagoras excursus. This speaks strongly to the extent of prolepsis in the *Phaedo*. As we will see in later chapters, the intelligent world soul will bear primarily responsibility for what comes to be in created world, although Timaeus will also explain the role of necessity or chance, an independent and disorderly source of motion that disrupts the orderly motions that proceed from souls, and the Demiurge, who is not Nous, is the best of causes, but he is intelligible and thus akin to intellect. What we might say, then, is that here Plato is integrating his ideas of intelligent agency from the *Phaedo* with his idea of psychic self-motion in the *Phaedrus*.

That is not to say that Plato has material συνάτια playing no substantive role in the cosmology of the *Phaedo*. Following Sedley, we should understand air, aether, and water to play the role of material conditions in the myth at the end of this dialogue; and we should understand that role to be contrasted with the incorrect role of causal primaries that is given to them by Anaxagoras. I will elaborate on this point presently.

⁴³ The Forms are not intellect, but they are intelligible, and Nous approaches them. They of course are causes in some sense for Plato, for they are what Socrates turns to in the absence of cosmology.

What is Plato's solution to the Implementation Problem? In the last part of this chapter and the following two, I will argue that Plato satisfies desiderata (1) and (3), and partially satisfies (2) by inventing Panpsychism. I will present Plato's 'Weltseelenlehre' or Doctrine of the World-soul, and in so doing I will show that the World-soul which animates the body of the cosmos as a whole [and the other, lesser cosmic gods associated with particular celestial bodies] is [are] the instrument[s] by which Plato brings intellect into the cosmos and gives it a means to guide and affect order therein.

§II. The Soul as Self-motion in the *Phaedrus*

1. *The Soul as Archē Kinēseōs*

No doctrine of the World-soul is developed within the *Phaedrus*. However, it possesses some theological material relating to the nature of the gods (i.e. divine souls). Furthermore, the account of the soul as self-mover used as a proof of its immortality is extremely important to the development of the World-soul doctrine and Plato's later, immanent theology, as it is used as the central thesis of the argument for the existence of (psychic) gods in *Laws* X, and the *Timaeus* assumes that the World-soul will be the mover and maintainer of the World-body.

The discussion of the soul's nature and its immortality is the first step in the argument that Socrates gives in his "Great Speech" to show that love is a beneficial, god-given madness. (The speech will go on to give an elaborate allegory of the transmigration of the soul from life to life with souls represented as winged chariots and horses, losing their wings from earthly corruption or regaining them through philosophical contemplation and purity). Socrates quips that it is the 'principle' or 'starting point' (*archē* - ἀρχή) of the proof (*apodeixis* - ἀποδείξις), for they "must understand the truth

about the nature of soul, both godly and human, by seeing both its affections and activities (245c2-4).⁴⁴ The joke is that the first principle of the whole argument will be that the soul is the first principle of motion.

All soul (*psuchē pasa* - Ψυχὴ πᾶσα), i.e. both human and divine, is immortal because that which is perpetually moving is immortal.⁴⁵ Stated first, because this principle of motion is the first principle of the argument about love, it is actually the conclusion of an argument about the nature of soul that runs from 245c5 to 246a2, as can be seen from the fact that this section of Socrates' speech ends with a slightly refined restatement of this starting line (245c5, 245e5-6a2).^{46, 47} In contrast to perpetually moving things that never die, there are things that are moved *by* others in addition to moving others, and when these cease to be moved they cease to live.⁴⁸ The soul is perpetually moving, according to Socrates, *because* it is a self-mover. A self-mover, as it is a principle of motion, (*archē kinēseōs* - ἀρχὴ κινήσεως), can have neither a beginning⁴⁹ nor an end, so it is at all times moving (245c7-8).⁵⁰

⁴⁴ “δεῖ οὖν πρῶτον ψυχῆς φύσεως περὶ θείας τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ἰδόντα πάθη τε καὶ ἔργα τάληθες νοῆσαι.”

⁴⁵ Although the *Phaedrus* features the tripartite theory of the soul, there is no question (as there is in the *Republic*) or a statement (as in the *Timaeus*) that parts of the soul are mortal and others are immortal. Indeed, the *Phaedrus*' afterlife myth presents appetite and spirit in the reigns of intellect both after death as well as within life. See below regarding the *Phaedrus* on the nature of the soul and tripartition.

⁴⁶ “Ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος. τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον.”

⁴⁷ “εἰ δ' ἔστιν τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχον [i.e. if self-movers are perpetually self-moving], μὴ ἄλλο τι εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν ἢ ψυχὴν, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον ψυχὴ ἂν εἴη.”

⁴⁸ “ἀεικίνητον” in 245c5 is disputed. An Oxyrhynchus papyrus gives “αὐτοκίνητον” (Oxy. 1017) and is adopted by M. Robin. Skemp (3 n.2) and Hackforth (65-6) argue persuasively against this.

⁴⁹ The text of argument (1) (that it cannot have a beginning and *still be a principle*) is disputed. Manuscripts B and T and Simplicius and Stobaeus read ἐξ ἀρχῆς at d3, giving us: “if a first principle came into being from anything, it would not do so from a first principle.” (Trans. Rowe). This seems to make little sense. Iamblichus' *Timaeus Locrum* (apud Theodoretus) has “εἰ γὰρ ἐγένετο, οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἐτι ἀρχή.” This is taken as ἐτι ἀρχὴ from Cicero's translation (*Tusculan Disputations* I,54: “nec enim esset id principium quod gignetur aliunde”). Hence Buttman emended the text to “ἐτι ἀρχή”, which Burnet accepted and Hackforth maintained (63 n.1). De Vries, Skemp (4 n.2) and more recently Rowe adopted the manuscript reading. Nehamas and Woodruff criticize this reading for lacking sense (30 n.66). We follow Burnet et al.

⁵⁰ “Only what moves itself [is immortal]; whereas it never abandons itself, it never ceases being moved....” “μόνον δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ κινεῖν, ἅτε οὐκ ἀπολείπον ἑαυτό, οὐποτε λήγει κινούμενον...”

A consequence of using the concept of an *archē kinēseōs* (ἀρχὴ κινήσεως) in order to show the immortality of the soul is the result that soul can never have come-to-be, and this is the last conclusion drawn in the argument proper (245e6-246a2).⁵¹ That is not a very surprising result, as, in the *Phaedo*, for instance, Socrates is required to show both the existence of the soul both after death and *prior* to birth. Looking forward to later works the statement is overturned; the soul is explicitly identified as something generated in both the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* yet it remains immortal (at least its divine part, reason) and self-motion. If there is a tension in this, it need not concern us here, for we are only concerned with the *Phaedrus*' introduction of the definition of the soul as self-motion, and some cosmological points drawn thence, but not with its possible use in a proof of the soul's immortality.

This argument for the immortality of the soul from perpetual motion is very likely to have been adapted by Plato from one given by Alcmaeon of Croton.⁵² No direct quote of the argument remains, but there are several sources of testimony.⁵³ Alcmaeon seems to have reasoned that the soul is in constant motion like divine things such as the planets and stars. To be divine means to be immortal, so presumably the celestial beings were to be understood to be immortal.⁵⁴ Therefore, since souls move continuously like celestial beings, it is reasonable to infer that they are immortal as well.⁵⁵ Plato makes a number of

⁵¹ “εἰ δ’ ἔστιν τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχον, μὴ ἄλλο τι εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν ἢ ψυχὴν, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀγένεόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον ψυχὴ ἂν εἴη.”

⁵² Aristotle *De Anima* 405a29ff. Taylor [1927] 306; Hackforth [1952] 68; Barnes [1982] p. 114ff.

⁵³ Regarding the argument: *De Anima* 405a29-b1, Diogenes Laertius *Lives* VIII.83 = DK 24 A12, and Aëtius IV 2, 2 = DK 24A12; Boethius in Eusebius, *PE* XI.28.9.

⁵⁴ Aristotle *ibid*; Cicero *De Natura Deorum* I.11, 27; Clement *Protr.* 66 (I 50, 20 St.) = DK 24 A12.

⁵⁵ Barnes rejects this reconstruction of the argument (117-20), which is Aristotle's, because it makes the argument a “hideously feeble analogy”. He prefers to reconstruct the argument in another way from Aëtius, wherein the inference from self-motion to immortality is immediate. I think that this is very unlikely, for precisely what is needed is some reason, even if only an analogical one, for thinking that the soul's motion indicates its immortality. By late 6th century standards, such an argument is no cause for embarrassment.

changes and augmentations to the argument, including giving a reason for taking the soul to be perpetually moving.

The similarities between the argument in Socrates' great speech and the reconstruction of Alcmaeon's argument as given above are highly informative. To any reader familiar with the argument's provenance, its adaptation will allude to celestial motion, thus immediately ushering in from the speech's beginning the celestial imagery that would otherwise only arrive at 246b6-7 with "patrols the whole heavens" (πάντα δὲ οὐρανὸν περιπολεῖ...). This throws the entire discussion of soul into a more cosmological light.

The differences, however, are even more telling. Alcmaeon takes the divinity of the celestial bodies, which are in constant motion, to establish the link between perpetual

Additionally, the reconstruction in Aëtius is apt to have been influenced by reading back into Alcmaeon some Platonic thoughts. *Self*-motion appears in the *Phaedrus* argument and in Aëtius, but only *perpetual*-motion is mentioned in Aristotle's report, which is the oldest surviving doxographical account.

If this is correct, then the inference to *perpetual*-motion from *self*-motion would seem to be Plato's innovation, and there would be further reason to accept "ἀεικίνητον" in 245c5. The argument in the *Phaedrus* to establish that connection turns on the idea of an ἀρχὴ κινήσεως, a source or first principle of motion. Such a first principle never *starts* nor *stops* moving. Two points, one for *start* and another for *stop*, are used to show this: (1) a source cannot have a beginning, for its beginning would be an origin of it, and thus it would not itself be an origin. (2) It cannot stop for if it did then nothing could ever start up again [from it]. The concept of "principle" goes as far back as Anaximander (DK 12A15), and the latter *mode* of reasoning also seems to have been used by Anaximander as in DK 12A16: if any of the contraries *had been* infinite (and more plentiful than its opposite) in the apeiron, then by now it would have exhausted its opposite (which it has not...).

On the other hand, the reasoning that establishes (1), that a principle of motion cannot itself have a *beginning*, is not likely to be Anaximander's point. In Aristotle's description of the theories that have the apeiron as their principle, the lack of a principle for itself is an attribute of the infinite. However Aristotle only specifically says about Anaximander himself that he thought the apeiron to be "deathless and imperishable" (*Physics* III.4 203b10-15 = DK 12A15). Furthermore, the "principle", in his successor Anaximenes' thought is reported to have had a beginning ("εὐμque gigni") even though it is infinite and perpetually moving, whence the objection that its immortality does not follow ("aut non omne quod ortum sit mortalitas consequatur.") (Cicero *De Natura Deorum* I.10, 26 = DK 13A10).

The idea that what is without end or death is also without beginning or birth seems to originate with Xenophanes (Aristotle *Rhetoric* II.23 1399b6-9 = DK 21A12) and to be further developed by the Eleatics. Now, Alcmaeon [fl. ~505-495 BCE] could have developed this point for himself or taken it from Xenophanes [c.570-post 478], even though he was an acerbic critic of Alcmaeon's master, Pythagoras. However, it seems much less likely that (1) could have been Alcmaeon's point, even if he knew point (2), which was long before established by the Milesians. For comparative dating of Alcmaeon and his status as a "Pythagorean" cf. Skemp 36-8.

motion and immortality. Plato accepts the link between perpetual motion, even perpetual circular motion, and immortality.⁵⁶ As we inferred above, it is Plato who adds the argument for taking the soul to be a perpetual mover and thus an eternal mover based on the fact that it is a self-mover. Interestingly, though, he denies the central example on which Alcmaeon's case rests: the divinity of the heavenly bodies, for Plato explicitly denies that the gods are anything but souls (*Phdr.* 246c5-d2).⁵⁷ Likewise, the first argument in *Laws X* treats only celestial *souls* as gods. This is in contrast to the popular view of the celestial bodies' divinity, which is likely why Socrates recuses himself from maintaining his heterodox position by saying, "but of course we must let this [that the gods are bodies *and* souls] be as it may please the gods, and speak accordingly (*Phdr.* 246d2-3)."⁵⁸ Above and beyond political prudence, at a doctrinal level Plato elsewhere accepts the divinity of celestial beings. In the *Republic* Socrates and Glaucon take the Sun to be a god, **not coming-into-being** and king over the sensible world as the Good is over the intelligible.⁵⁹ Thus the immortality of the celestial bodies is not to be found

⁵⁶ Hackforth concurs that this is the main point Plato takes from Alcmaeon. "What Alcmaeon may be taken to have suggested to Plato is his first step, the premises τὸ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον, in other words his approach to the question of soul's immortality by way of the category of κίνησις." [1952] p. 68.

⁵⁷ Other philosophers, too, criticized Alcmaeon for making gods of bodies, e.g. Cicero's Epicurean in *De Natura Deorum*, Velleius: "Crotoniates autem Alcmaeo, qui soli et lunae relisque sideribus animoque praetera divinitatem dedit, non sensit sese mortalibus rebus immortalitatem dare." I.11, 27 =DK 24 A12.

⁵⁸ For the popular view and the troubles the historical Socrates suffered for appearing to reject it cf. *Apology* 26d1-2ff.

⁵⁹ That the sun is a god (and is among the gods in heaven): 508a4 "τῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ θεῶν", 508a9 "πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν θεόν" [i.e. ἥλιον]; that it is not coming-into-being even though it causes other things to come-to-be (just as the good itself is beyond being, but causes the Forms to be): 509b2-4 "τὸν ἥλιον τοῖς ὁρῶμένοις οὐ μόνον οἶμαι τὴν τοῦ ὁρᾶσθαι δύναμιν παρέχειν φήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν γένεσιν καὶ αὔξησιν καὶ τροφήν, οὐ γένεσιν αὐτὸν ὄντα."; that it is king of the sensible realm (τόπου): 509d1-4. He stops short of calling the sun's realm heaven (οὐρανός) to avoid the pun or weak etymological connection to visible (ὁρατός). It would be like saying "heaven" and "have-seen" or "the sky" and "the scryed". The sun is recognized as something the Greeks regard a god at 821ff. This passage may suggest that it *is* a god.

exclusively in the late period's *Timaeus*, but also in the *Republic* and in the *Statesman*'s myth.⁶⁰

The second important difference is this: in order to characterize the soul, Socrates divides things into two sorts – those which move others and are moved by others and those which move others but are themselves only self-moved. Alcmaeon's argument implicitly distinguishes between things that are always moving as against those which are not. It does not distinguish the self-moved from the externally moved.

Counting on the idea that something that is “ἔμψυχος” (literally “animated”) is alive, i.e. that soul is the mark of the living animal, Plato can make a fairly persuasive case that souls are self-movers (*Phd* 105c8-d4). Animals, after all, grow and move about of their own accord, while inanimate things such as rocks and corpses move only when something else first moves them. Such a connection between life, self-motion, and soul is not quite so explicit here as in the *Laws* (895c*ff.* see below), but this idea is probably implicit at 245c with “what moves, and is moved by, something else stops living when it stops moving.” Absent the account of soul/self-motion as the cause and essence of life, this line really makes no sense, unless life just is any kind of motion, and that neither seems right nor Plato's own view. Hence psychic motion is the sort of motion belonging to a thing that is moving itself and moving others rather than being strictly driven and driving others in turn by inertia (245e).

The full import of casting the distinction in terms of αὐτοκίνησις (as Bury puts it) and ἑτεροκίνησις rather than perpetual vs. discontinuous motion is not immediately

⁶⁰ The cosmos is twice called immortal, although its immortality has to be maintained by Cronos: 270a4-5, 273e3-4. The cosmos is not directly called a god, but it possesses life and wisdom (269d1-2), and it can be inferred to be divine (θεῖος) by its comparison to other, eternal things that are the most divine, θεοτάτοις (269d6).

apparent in the *Phaedrus* itself, at least not without hindsight from the *Laws* and suggestions from the earlier dialogues we have already examined. The significance of the distinction is that it makes soul the *active* rather than passive player in the cosmos. In *Laws* X, as I explain in chapter 3, this is how Plato works out the priority of soul over body. That is to say that this distinction between primary (self-) motion and secondary (external) motion yields him the thesis of ‘**care of soul for nature**’. Plato uses self-motion to show the eternal motion and immortality of the soul, but not to prove any special cosmological role for the soul. This connection is not emphasized in the *Phaedrus* as it is in the *Laws*, but the thesis is mentioned. The grounds for making the connection do appear in the argument when Socrates notes, “And in fact, such a [self-] mover as this is (a) spring and source (*archē* - ἀρχή) of motion in the other things (245c8-9).” If souls not only move themselves but also those things that are not self-moved, then souls will be in a position to move all things in the cosmos. However, this is not deployed in the argument to prove such a point. Rather, the thesis of ‘**the care of soul for nature**’ occurs in the myth, to which we now turn.

2. The Cosmic function of Soul(s) in the *Phaedrus*

At 246b 6-7 Plato asserts without argument that “all soul cares for all that is inanimate, and it patrols all of the heavens, coming-to-be at different times in different forms.”⁶¹ What is the domain of the soul’s activity here? Is it strictly celestial? “The heavens”, *ouranos* – “οὐρανός”, can mean for Plato and for Aristotle the entire cosmos and not just the celestial sphere, as, for instance, in the *De Caelo* (*Peri Ouranou* - Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ). It could apply to the more limited domain of the stars and planets here, but it

⁶¹ “ψυχή πᾶσα παντὸς ἐπιμελείται τοῦ ἀψυχου, πάντα δὲ οὐρανὸν περιπολεῖ, ἄλλοτ’ ἐν ἄλλοις εἶδεσι γιγνομένη.”

need not be read as excluding the rest of the world. Since we first learn at the start of the sentence that soul cares for everything that is without soul, we should expect it to patrol and be involved with the rest of the cosmos where the are, after all, plenty of things without souls. Furthermore, “So long as it is perfect and winged,” we are soon told, “it travels the skies (*meteōroporei* - μετεωροπορεῖ) and manages the whole cosmos (πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖ) (246c1-2).” Later, when it sheds its wings, it descends into a particular body and, giving it life, makes it seem as if the body moves on its own. Until then, however, it appears to have the whole cosmos as its domain. Hence we could well have an intimation of panpsychism here.

The more important point is that as soul is wandering or patrolling “the heavens”, it is taking care of and managing what is without soul (246b6-7). What is without soul means bodies (insofar as a given body is not inhabited and animated by a soul). The collection of moving bodies in the cosmos is not singled out as “φύσις” (*phusis*); we might say that here we find a version of the **Care of Soul for Nature** that is less oriented to debates with the Presocratics in Natural Philosophy. For the sake of strict precision, then, let us call what we find in the *Phaedrus* the **Care of Souls for All Bodies**.⁶² “All Bodies” and not “Body” because that would suggest only that a given soul cares for its given body and nothing more. This even simpler idea might constitute a stage 0 in the development towards the full thesis of **Care of Soul for Nature**.

Nevertheless, all soul has some kind of priority over all body here. Souls animate bodies by descending into them, but they also seem to be able to manage (*διοικεῖ-διοικεῖ*) the cosmos without being in any particular body. This is somewhat curious, but,

⁶² It should be noted that the idea that the soul must care for the body is to be found in earlier works of Plato’s. See especially *Grg.* 465d. That passage mentions Anaxagoras, but Plato makes no cosmological claims there of his own.

in the context of the rest of the argument, it makes sense why Plato cannot say here that there is a World-soul with the whole World-body as its body. Specifically, the combination of body and soul is denied immortality, and gods are not to be identified as beings with both, but as souls (246c6-d2). Speaking of the World-body, apart from the World-soul, would raise the question of whether the cosmos is perishable, and that is something that Plato is not willing to accept, even if he will admit that it is generated.

Is any connection made between the gods, as such, and the administrative role of souls in the cosmos? There is at least one strong hint of this, although it requires reading into a passage with information from the *Cratylus* and the *Philebus*. Zeus, foremost in the procession, is called the great leader in heaven (246e4). There is nothing very surprising about this epithet, for Zeus was always thought of as the leader of the gods, processions of gods or to the gods were not uncommon (as in the Parthenon friezes), and Zeus was ever most a sky god; “Ζεὺς” (or “Διός” –*Dios*- in the genitive case) is the Greek form of the Proto-Indo-European “*Dyeus” or “*Dyas”, the bright shining sky.

What is less traditional, though, is what Socrates goes on to say about him. While he drives his winged chariot at the head of the procession Zeus is “putting everything into order and caring for it” (“διακοσμῶν πάντα καὶ ἐπιμελούμενος”) (246e5-6). Here again we have “ἐπιμελεῖσθαι” (*epimeleisthai*), ‘taking care of’, as the job of a soul, and it is responsible for “everything”. But, there are two differences. This time it is over “everything” without conditions or restrictions to those things without souls. More importantly, he is “putting into order” (*diakosmein* - διακόσμειν) everything. This verb is one of Plato’s most preferred terms for the activity of god(s) establishing order in the

world, of making the all a *cosmos* (i.e. something well-put together, neat, or orderly) in the fullest sense.⁶³

Zeus, not the other gods so far as Socrates tells us, does this cosmic arrangement. Let us recall that the etymology of Zeus' names (*Dia* - Δία and *Zēna* - Ζήνα) was “*di hon zēn* - δι' ὃν ζῆν”, (“that) by which there is life”. Understanding Zeus' name to mean the cause of life was deemed correct because, “Certainly, no one is more the cause (*aitios* αἴτιος) of life (*to zēn* - τὸ ζῆν) whether for us or anything else, than the ruler and king of all things (ὁ ἄρχων τε καὶ βασιλεὺς τῶν πάντων) (*Crat.* 396a4-9).”

In the *Phaedrus*, then, we have Zeus as a soul – which has been identified as the cause of living motion or life in bodies – and as the orderer and caretaker of all. While the *Cratylus* called soul the holder and maintainer of nature, and gave Zeus the name ‘cause of life’, it did not identify soul with life-giving *per se*. One would have to combine the etymology of “Zeus” with the *Phaedo*, especially the final defense of immortality where soul is linked to life-bearing, in order to identify the supreme life-giver as a soul. Then, using the *Cratylus*' etymology of “soul”, this majestic, divine soul could be understood to be caring for the natural world. Only then would we reach what we have here in the *Phaedrus*. While the dialogue speaks of “all soul” it never explicitly mentions a “soul of all”, i.e. a *World-soul*. Additionally, unlike the *World-soul* of the *Timaeus*, or the outer moving soul of the *Laws*, neither Zeus nor any other god/soul seems to be responsible for the outermost cosmic motion of the ecliptic against which the planets move opposite. Rater, in the context of the myth the “ridge of heaven” moves the gods with its own circular motion (247b7-c2). However, all soul, (Zeus' soul especially), is

⁶³ Another would of course be *dēmiourgein* - δημιουργεῖν, crafting or constructing, the verb of action paronymous with the noun *dēmiourgos* – δημιουργός, ‘craftsman’, as in “the Demiurge”, the creator god who makes the cosmos in the creation myths of the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*.

doing much of the leading, guiding, and ordering work on the cosmic level for which Plato elsewhere invokes the World-soul. We are “getting warmer”, as children say.

To sum up the *Phaedrus* makes the following claims, which are crucial to the development to Plato’s immanent theology and concept of the World-soul:

1. Soul is essentially a source of motion (*archē kinēseōs* - ἀρχὴ κινήσεως) and self-mover (*to auto kinoun* - τὸ αὐτὸ κινοῦν);
2. Psychic self-motion is prior to and ultimately responsible for all posterior forms of motion.
3. Souls care for (*epimeletai* - ἐπιμέλεται) all that is without soul.
4. The soul is ungenerated.
5. The gods’ souls lack the bad parts that mortals’ have.
6. The [minds of] gods are not the Forms, but the Forms nourish them.
7. The gods are souls, not bodies or soul-body unions.
8. Zeus, the chief soul-god, puts the heavens in order.

§III. Analysis of the cosmological role of the World-soul from the Cosmological Passage

In Chapter 4 I discuss the cosmology in the *Philebus* at length. Here, for the sake of comparison for the remainder of Part One of the dissertation, I will simply state the functions attributed to the World-soul in the *Philebus* without further discussion, which would be redundant. What is it exactly that the World-soul and its intelligence are responsible for in the *Philebus*?

1. It makes human bodies by having its body furnish them with their constituent elements [29b6-d8].

2. It animates, nourishes, and guides the body of the World as a whole just as our souls do in our bodies. [29c5-30b7]
3. It provides aid for human growth and nourishment as well, either directly by sustaining the nature of the human body, or indirectly by providing plant-life, the seasons, etc. The latter seems more likely, but we cannot tell with any great precision. [30a9-c7]
4. It is responsible for governing the heavens and keeping them moving in an orderly, well arranged fashion. It is thereby responsible for the “years, seasons, and months”.⁶⁴ [26b1-3; 28c6-9; 30c2-30d4]

In the next chapter we turn to the *Timaeus*, where we have the fullest account of the ontology of soul in the entire Platonic corpus, and the most detailed discussion of the nature and functions of the World-soul and other divine souls.

⁶⁴ For more detail, see below in Chapter 5, §III

Chapter 2 - The Developed theory of the World-soul in the *Timaeus*

In this chapter I will discuss the nature and function of the World-soul in the *Timaeus*. To do so it will be necessary to first explain the dialogue and to run through the general interpretive issues that beset its study. However, in discussing the ‘Process Interpretation’ of the creation myth and in covering the various creative acts that the Craftsman god, the Demiurge, performs, including making the World-soul, we will also prepare ourselves for later discussions of the Demiurge and his nature as well as the World-soul (abbreviated as $\Pi\Psi$).

After setting up the basic issues of the dialogue in §I, we will run through the stages of the world’s creation, paying extra attention to certain aspects of the World-soul’s creation. In particular we will first look at how the Demiurge creates the ‘soul matter’ out of which the World-soul (and later other souls) are constructed, and the second major part of the soul’s construction to be discussed will be the Demiurge’s mathematical structuring of the soul according to harmonies. The purpose of the first discussion is to explain the basic ontological nature of soul in the Plato’s late thought. The importance of the second is that it helps to explain the differences between the Demiurge and souls and to explain what it is that souls are and can do/can know. This helps to show the mathematical nature of his Demiurgical activities, and how they lead to the (World)-soul’s ability to move rationally, according to harmonious ratios, in three dimensions.

I will then discuss the relationship between the different planets or celestial gods, on the one hand, and the World-soul on the other hand. Even though they are distinct gods, they really share the same soul, the World-soul, which means that the tasks

assigned to the created gods by their father, the Demiurge, are really all tasks belonging to the same immanent psychically powered cosmos, its single divine psyche being the World-soul.

Lastly, we will survey the various functions that the World-soul performs.

§I. Introduction to the *Timaeus*

1. *The Dialogue*

The *Timaeus* is the single most important dialogue for studying Plato's late metaphysical, psychological, and theological views and his only written work specifically devoted to the topic of cosmology or the study of the nature of the sensible world and its creation. It is set in Athens during the Panathenaic festival in a year no later than 408/407.⁶⁵ On the day prior to the events in the *Timaeus* and its unfinished sister dialogue, the *Critias*, Socrates had hospitably lavished fellow Athenian Critias and his three foreign houseguests - Timaeus, Hermocrates, and one unnamed other who does not appear the next day - with an oral presentation of the Kallipolis, the ideal city ruled by philosopher-kings. The details of the political theory (for it is only politics that are explicitly mentioned, not metaphysics) are clearly meant to evoke the *Republic*, although the fictional conversation in question is not the conversation narrated in the *Republic*, for that conversation was held at the home of Cephalus during the festival of Bendis and with several different men in attendance (e.g. Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus) (Cornford [1937] 4-5).

⁶⁵ Cornford [1937] 2. The location is perhaps the house of Critias where the guests are staying, although that is not where Socrates gave his discussion of the Kallipolis during the previous day's conversation, for Hermocrates says that he Critias, and Timaeus had begun to discuss their sequel speeches on their way back to the guest quarters of Critias' home (20c6-d1).

Nonetheless, the *Republic* is at the outset evoked and endorsed for its politics, and later, implicitly, for its metaphysics and epistemology with the distinctions between Intelligible/Sensible and Being/Becoming drawn by Timaeus in the proem of his speech (27d5-28d3). I mention this because this evocation of the *Republic* will bear weight in my arguments for my interpretation of the Demiurge in Chapter 6.

Socrates expresses his dissatisfaction (also voiced the day before) with the fact that the Kallipolis, so described, seems like a lifeless creature in a painting, while he wishes to see it in action. Unfortunately Socrates thinks himself incapable of doing a rhetorically adequate job of recounting tales that would celebrate such a city (19b2-e8), but whereas Critias, Timaeus, and Hermocrates are better-suited for such a task, they had agreed at the end of the previous day's discussion to repay Socrates' hospitality by furnishing him with sequel speeches that would bring his city to life. The dialogues of the *Timaeus*, the unfinished *Critias*, and the projected *Hermocrates* were to be the records of these speeches, along with dialogical framing material at the beginnings and ends of the works. Critias will recount the tale of how ancient Athens, a shining example of proper Platonic government, defeated the mighty but god-forsaken Empire of Atlantis, nine millennia earlier. (It is in the beginning of the unfinished *Critias* that Plato gave the world the much beloved myth of Atlantis). Timaeus will set up Critias' discussion by recounting how the gods created men, or as it turns out, the entire world was created, *ab initio* until the creation of man and then woman and the other animals.

The dialogue, considered as a record of a cosmogony achieved primarily through the creative works of one supreme and benevolent, god, the Demiurge, has more in common with *Genesis* I.1-II.4 than it does with the cosmogonies of Greek religion, their

Near Eastern sources, or Indo-European and Semitic cosmogonical myths, generally.⁶⁶ In these the world is brought into being primarily through reproduction, violence, or often both, with whole regions of the cosmos such as the sea, the sky, the earth, or the ‘depths’ being constituted out of the very bodies of born and slain gods and monsters. This can be accomplished by the birth of successive generations of gods who *are* regions of the world, e.g. Geb (Earth) and his sister-wife Nut (Sky) who are begotten by Shu (the firmament) and Tefnut (moisture) in Egyptian mythology of the Heliopolitan Ennead; or, in Sumerian tradition, Enlil (the Winds) from An(u), the first generation Sky god, and Ki, the goddess of Earth; or, in *Hesiod’s Theogony*, Chaos (the “Gap”) giving birth to Erebus (the Depths) and Gaia (Earth), she then giving birth to her first husband Ouranos (the Heavens) - with whom she conceives the Titans, the Giants, and other monsters - and later her second husband Ocean (with whom she begets rivers and other bodies of water). In cases where violence is key there will be a primordial god of chaos, usually a serpent or dragon, who represents the sea and is slain by a Sky/Storm god to legitimate his rule over the cosmos. This often allows the Storm god to replace his own father, himself usually a more removed sky god, a “*deus otiosus*”. Thus the ruler of the gods can achieve his reign and initiate the current age by a peaceful succession earned by taming chaos. Alternatively, he can slay, castrate, and/or imprison his own father.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Although a highly ‘Demiurgical’ exception is Prajapati as Vishvakarma in *Rig Veda* 10 (10.8.3).

⁶⁷ In the Akkadian *Enuma Elish* [Babylonian] there are, first of all, the primordial gods of the waters, Apsu (the sweet subterranean waters) and his wife, the monstrous Tiamat (the bitter sea waters), above and below. They then give birth to other gods who, three generations later, produce Anu, the sky, and Ki, the Earth. These younger gods inhabit the waters eventually disturbing Apsu’s rest. The wise Ea (Enki in Sumerian), son of Anu, slays the angered Apsu, and thus earns the right to supersede his father, Anu, as the cosmic ruler. His son, the Babylonian Storm-god Marduk, in turn amicably succeeds Ea when only Marduk can defeat Tiamat, Apsu’s vengeful widow. In the Assyrian version, Marduk is merely replaced in name by Assur. In another, related tradition, the bird-like monster Imdugud (Akkadian: Anzu) is slain by the Sumerian/Akkadian god Ninurta, son of Enlil, after the monster steals the Tablets of Destiny. (In the *Enuma Elish*, Kingu, Apsu’s first son, does this, and he is then slain by Marduk in recovering the tablets).

In contrast to these, the monotheistic, ‘verbo-centric’ first creation story at the beginning of *Genesis* seems closer to the *Timaeus*, even though, they both share with the others the theme of the chief god establishing order, a *cosmos*, by subduing primordial chaos.⁶⁸ But whatever their relative similarities might be (which ancient Platonists beginning with Philo were often keen to extend or exaggerate) they are two basically

In the Hurrian *Kingship in Heaven* (or *Song of Kumarbi*), Alalu is overthrown by his son Anu, who is in turn overthrown by Kumarbi. Kumarbi bites off Anu’s genitals, swallows them, and gives birth to Teshub, the Storm/Sky god. In one version, Teshub conspires with Anu to defeat Kumarbi. In the *Song of Ullikumi* myth, Kumarbi begets the stone god Ullikumi (not unlike the “Earthborn” Giants) to defeat Teshub. Teshub fails to defeat Ullikumi until Ea aids him. Teshub also famously establishes his lasting reign by slaying the dragon serpent Illuyanka. This is repeated in the Hattite and then Hittite myths with Teshub equivalent Sky/Storm Gods Taru and Tarhunt, respectively, slaying Illuyanka. In the Ugaritic *Myth of Baal-Aliyan*, from Canaan, the storm god Ba’al defeats the monstrous Yamm, literally “Sea”, and thereby replaces his distant and removed (*deus otiosus*) sky god father El. In the ancient Hebrew version of the myth, Yahweh also defeats a sea dragon god of chaos, Leviathan (“Lawtan” in Ugaritic), who is the sea (*yam*) (Job 41.1ff, cf. *Psalms* 74, 104, *Isaiah* 27:1). It is also a chaotic demon called Rahab who shakes the sea and makes waves and uproar who is mentioned in *Isaiah* at 30:6-7 and 51:9-10 (the latter is the work of an author later than “Proto Isaiah”, i.e. the author of all or most of *Isaiah* bks 1-39.), while God’s triumph over Rahab in battle is referred to in *Psalms* 89:9-10. In the Sanskrit *Rig Veda*, Indra, the storm/sky god, defeats the draconic asura (demon) Vritra. The Ouroboros-like demon, whose name means “enveloper” and who is also known as “Ahi” (“snake”), who is holding the waters of the world captive. So also Perun, chief of the Slavic gods and a god of storms, slays Veles the dragon; or Perkunas, in Baltic form who, fights Velnius, the Devil (and eventually supersedes his father, the *deus otiosus* of the sky, Dievas [as from the Proto-Indo-European **Dyas* – shining sky]). Likewise, the *Eddas* tell that at Ragnarok, Thor, the Norse god of Thunder, will slay and be slain by Jörmungandr, the great Midgard Serpent (Midgarðsormur), who encircles the world. For examples in the Norse tradition of world creation through the filling of a primordial gap (the Ginnungagap) and the slaying of the eldest being (Ymir) by the gods (Ymir’s great grandsons, the sons of Borr: Odin and his brothers Vili and Vé), see the *Völupsá*, the *Grímnismál*, and the *Vafþrúðnismál* in the *Elder (Poetic) Edda*. The Greek equivalents are thus: Cronus deposes his father, the first sky god Ouranos, by castrating him (like Kumarbi and Anu). He in turn attempts to swallow all his children, only to be defeated by his son the storm god Zeus. Zeus in turn must legitimate his uncontested rule by defeating the many-headed serpent monster Typhoeus, and later, the earth-born giants.

⁶⁸ In *Genesis* 1:1-2:4, the World begins with land that is “shapeless” and “formless” or “helter-skelter” (תהו ובהו), with darkness on the face of the depths (1:2). Elohim (אלוהים) begins creation with his breath over the face of the waters that preexist creation (1:2). After creating light on the first day (1:3-5), Elohim goes on to separate waters from waters with a space or “firmament” (*rakia* - רָקִיעַ), thus framing the waters above into the sky and those below into the sea (1:6-8). A further gathering of the lower waters results at the start of the third day in stable earth and first forms of (plant) life (1:9-13). Thus we have chaos expressed in a very abstract way, and we have water above and below (which, in the guises of Tiamat and Apsu, is exactly what we begin with in the first lines of the *Enuma Elish*). In the *Timaeus*, we begin with the shapeless, formless, and thoroughly shaken and god-forsaken receptacle. The world is first brought into order when reason (*nous* - νοῦς) conquers necessity (*anankē* - ἀνάγκη) not by violence but by “persuasion” (47e3-48a5). The above survey of myths is useful only because that passage is a crucial one in testing my interpretation, so I wish to frame it in ancient literary/mythological history as much as possible. I will return to it in Chapter 5.

different kinds of literature.⁶⁹ The *Timaeus* is a philosophical work on metaphysics and cosmology that is framed as a creation myth, wherein the world is made through divine reflection on the Forms, the introduction of harmonic ratios into *soul-stuff* and geometrical figure into space, and also the activities of numerous subordinate psychic gods, rather than by the declarative acts of the one and only god Elohim (אלוהים).

2. General Issues for Reading the *Timaeus*

Methodological controversies over how the dialogue is to be read have arisen because of the highly speculative character of the work, and because of its conceit as a ‘muthos’ of creation, such that all too often it was read and interpreted with an eye to *Genesis*. One issue is the dating of the work. Its place among the most late of Plato’s works was never seriously questioned until Ryle and G.E.L. Owen, who disdained speculative metaphysics and wanted to believe that Plato could have abandoned it in favor of something closer to linguistic or conceptual analysis, claimed that the *Timaeus* belonged to “middle period”, whose strongly dualistic theory of Forms was later abandoned in his late, analytic phase.⁷⁰ Thankfully, few scholars still worry about that. Without further ado, I will state that I believe the dialogue to be extremely late.

The other major hermeneutical problem is the disagreement over whether to give the work a “literal” or “non-literal” interpretation. Literal v. Non-literal or Allegorical are too coarse. No interpretation takes everything literally, e.g. no one thinks that the Demiurge actually uses a “mixing bowl” in creating soul.⁷¹ At most they take this to be an oblique reference to the Receptacle. The central question that divides literalists and

⁶⁹ See especially Philo’s *On the Creation of the World apud Moses*. For an extended comparative analysis of *Genesis* and the *Timaeus*, see Pelikan [1997].

⁷⁰ Owen [1965], Ryle [1966].

⁷¹ Proclus regarded the mixing bowl as a symbol for Rhea, but she too is ultimately a metaphysical/goddess entity, and not a piece of kitchenware or a blacksmith’s tool. *In Tim.* III.249.16ff, V.120.17ff.

allegorists is whether Plato literally endorses the idea that the creation of the cosmos was a distinct and unique event.⁷² Before creation, there is a finite amount of time between the creation and the present, or any other specific point in time. I call this the “Event Interpretation” or “*E*-reading” for short.

Alternatively, one can understand the “generation” of the cosmos, both its body and spirit, not as a coming-into-being from non-being, i.e. as a creation, but rather *only* as a designation of the cosmos’ inferior ontological status to and causal dependence upon ungenerated, eternal Beings. Therefore, the transition of the cosmos from ante-genetic disorder to post-genetic order is not an actual change that at some point was accomplished, but rather something along the lines of a thought experiment, in which the ante-genetic flux is the state of the Receptacle with all Demiurgical activity abstracted away. In this reading the “creation” myth becomes merely a heuristic for better describing the respective ontological and causal contributions that god, the World-soul, the receptacle, et al. makes to the orderliness and disorderliness of the world as we know it. These “factors” are operating at all times, and have been operating for all time (so no beginning point from which one can count to the present exists). “Creation” becomes a name for this constant “blending” of Form and space. This can be called a view of “constant creation”, or better still, since that name might suggest a form of occasionalism that regards every successive moment as a new creation event, a “Process Interpretation” of the creation myth. I will call this the “*P*-reading” for short.⁷³

⁷² See Vlastos [1965].

⁷³ The literature on this topic is quite large. See: Shorey [1888]; Taylor [1923]; Tate, J. [1929-1930]; Cornford [1937]; Vlastos [1939], [1965], [1975]; Cherniss [1944], [1945], [1954a], [1954b]; Hackforth [1959]; Whittaker [1969]; Tarán [1971]; Sorabji [1983]; Smith [1985]; Robinson [1986], [1995b]; Gill [1987]; Ashbaugh [1988]; Baltes [1996]; Wright [2000a]; Zeyl [2000]; Dillon [2003b]; Escobar Moncada

Many of the ‘anthropomorphisms’ of the Demiurge and the other gods are certainly dispensable, serving as generic literary conceits rather than philosophically significant symbolism. However, dispensing with the Demiurge entirely or denying that there is a creation of the cosmos (even if it be in the atemporal sense of “constant creation”), is to remove any legitimate context for full meaning.⁷⁴ Adopting a “Process” interpretation is acceptable, since it does not jettison any particular item or set of items in the creation myth. Rather it provides a framework for understanding what creation in the myth means. Saying that event creation is dispensable is not to say that it necessarily should be dispensed with. Agnosticism about literal temporality should be the default position, since the “no time before time” argument is flawed. (There can be succession or *duré* without time proper). On both interpretations, ‘coming-to-be’ is used as an ontological designation for things that change and have a degree of reality inferior to that of real Being. Where the Event and Process interpretations would affect my points differently, I present both possible versions of my view, side-by-side.

§II. The *Timaeus*’ Creation Story

Since the *Timaeus* does not follow a strictly linear progression, either logically or chronologically, a brief survey of the major events in the creation story and the introductory metaphysical proem are necessary before we can focus on the ΠΨ. To fully understand the divine World-soul, whose creation is discussed in 35a-37c and whose divine tasks are discussed in a variety of places (37d-40c, 41b-47e, 69c.*ff*), we will need

[2003b]; Miglori [2003]; Rowe [2003]; Broadie [2004]; Carone [2004]; Gregory [2007]; Sedley [2007]; Burnyeat [2009]; Betegh [2010]; Mourelatos [2010].

⁷⁴ See Robinson, T.M. [1967], [1986], [1995b] on the indispensability of the Demiurge.

to understand the basic Platonic metaphysical framework in which Timaeus is operating (27c-29d).

1. *Ontological Primaries*

Timaeus begins his speech with a prayer to the gods for aid (a typical trope in late Plato that introduces a new theological or metaphysical passage) (27c1-d4), and then a series of arguments that establish that the world is created and describe the basic natures of the world and its creator. He begins by laying down a framework of Platonic metaphysics as starting principles. There are two basic ontological categories: Being, which is uncreated, grasped by intellect with an account, and always the same (i.e. changeless); and that which Comes-to-be, which is always becoming but never is, can be grasped by opinion using unreasoning sense perception, and is in a constant state of change) (27d5-28a4).

Timaeus' next metaphysical postulate is that anything that comes to be must have arisen from a cause, for it is impossible for there to be a generation (*genesin* – γένεσιν) apart from a cause (αίτιος) (28a4-5). Two basic facts about the created world and its creator are presented as givens: the created world is beautiful, and its craftsman is good; the alternative is “impermissible to say” (i.e. blasphemous). It is further assumed that if the world is created, the cause is a craftsman (demiourgos), for Timaeus shifts without comment from cause to demiurge (28a4-6).⁷⁵ Such arguments occur elsewhere in Plato's late writings, and he is perhaps expecting his reader to bear in mind discussions such as the one at *Sophist* 265a-e, which argues that beautiful order, such as that found in living things and the heavens, must come from an intelligent cause rather than from nature or

⁷⁵. A similar jump from cause to craftsman or intelligent creator takes place in the *Philebus* at 27a5-b1.

mindless chance. He contends further that the creative activity of this intelligence can be called divine (as against mortal) making (*poiēsis*), by divine craft (*technē*) (265a4-b1).⁷⁶

A craftsman, it is assumed, creates something according to a design or model (*paradeigma* – παράδειγμα). On the basis of the ontological dichotomy above, Plato infers that when a craftsman creates a work in imitation of the form and character of an intelligible model, it will necessarily possess beauty, while what he makes by looking at a sensible model will lack beauty (28a6-b2).

Hence, a good craftsman would use an intelligible rather than sensible model. Therefore, the Demiurge, being the “best of all causes” naturally bases the created world off of an intelligible model, i.e. one or more of the Forms (29a5-6).

Being and becoming are only two of three basic ontological categories or factors. The third, which accounts for randomness in the universe, is known as the Receptacle or the straying cause. This receptacle is variously described as space, as the wet nurse of coming to be, and as the material out of which various appearances are formed. While it is not fire at any point, it is that in which an appearance of fire, although not the form, can appear. The receptacle and its nature will be addressed at greater length in later sections discussing the ontology of the world soul in the first step of its creation. For the purposes of the current discussion it is enough to note that, in the contrivance of the myth, a state of initial disorder exists prior to creation in which traces of elements seem to make their way through the Receptacle, although they are not full-fledged appearances. The initial disorder exists in an entirely god-forsaken state, into which the demiurge inserts order, both physical and psychological. However, to the extent that appearances exist, even in

⁷⁶ Cp. *Timaeus* 68d for what is mortal v. divine work.

this disordered Receptacle, we can say that becoming is a phenomenon of any kind of appearance. Appearances are reflections or imitations of Beings, and the receptacle is the medium in which they occur. Though utterly imperfect, prior to ordering, all three of these are eternal.

Being, becoming, and the receptacle always have been and always will be, although it is only “after” creation that localized parts of the receptacle ‘reflect’ stable images of the Forms, leading to structured or orderly becoming. The Receptacle serves three functions: it provides ‘space’, within which things can appear and bodies and souls can move; it supplies material or at least the substance from which appearances are formed; and it acts as the primordial source of disorderly motion in the sensible world for which the Demiurge and the other gods are not responsible. In both the myth of the *Statesman* and of the *Timaeus* this state of initial, pre-created disorderly motion is ultimately responsible for the disorder that remains in the world (*Pol.* 273b4-d4; *Tim.* 48a5-7, 52e1-53b7). While I do not deny the other functions, in this discussion of the soul’s ontology I am primarily concerned with the role that the Receptacle plays as a space or place of becoming, and secondarily interested in the so-called “traces” in the Receptacle prior to creation.

Creation begins in the *Timaeus*, if “begins” is the correct term, when the Demiurge becomes aware of the state of disorder. Because he is completely good and wishes to share his goodness unstintingly, unlike the traditional Greek gods who are jealous of mortals for their happiness, he sets out to make the receptacle and the world of coming-to-be as good as possible—which is to say, as much like him as possible. Among

the things that come to be, those with nous are best, and since “*Nous*” always exists in a soul, it is necessary for him to create the world in such a way as to possess a soul.

2. Creation of the World-soul [34b10-36d7]

Table 2: Steps in the World-soul’s Generation

#	Step
α	Mixing of components to create the soul’s matter, “Ψ-material”
$-\alpha 1$	Mixing primary forms of Being, Sameness and Otherness into respective intermediates.
$-\alpha 2$	Mixing together of the three intermediate, mixed forms into one mixture.
β	Apportionment and internal binding of the Ψ-material with ratios
$-\beta 1$	Even and Odd portions in geometric ratios
$-\beta 2$	Interval portions according to harmonic ratios
$-\beta 3$	Interval portions according to arithmetic ratios
$-\beta 4$	Leftovers of the soul-material
γ	Compound shaped into the Circles of the Same and the Different
$-\gamma 1$	The harmonized mixture is divided in two strips
$-\gamma 2$	The strips are fixed together into an X
$-\gamma 3$	The strips are given their (basic) respective motion
Δ	The Seven-fold division of the Circle of the Different

Although he discusses the creation of the body of the cosmos (31b4-34a7) before the World-soul’s creation (34a8-36d7), Timaeus insists that the actual order of the Demiurge’s creations was the reverse (34b10-c4). “Both prior in excellence and senior in generation, so as to be the mistress and ruler of what it rules [viz. the body], was the manner in which he constructed the soul (34c4-35a1).” At this point in the dialogue some facts about the World-soul have already been revealed:

- It will have to have intellect in it, for intellect cannot be separate from soul (30b3).
- The Demiurge placed it in the center of the World’s body, stretched it through all of it, and covered the body with it from without (34b3-4).

-Along with the body, it turns in a circle; so with the body it moves in the manner associated with intellect (*nous*-νοῦς) or reason (*phronesis*-φρόνησις), viz. circular, non-lateral motion. It rotates in place (34b4-5, and with it 34a1-5).

- The soul *comes-to-be*, and its cause is the Demiurge.

The construction of the World-soul is a complex affair, and it can be divided up in a variety of ways.⁷⁷ I will discuss it in terms of four main stages or steps, α - δ , which contain their own sub-stages. The Demiurge's first step in creating souls is to make three forms⁷⁸, which will in turn be mixed together to compose the basic substance of souls. Described through the language of metallurgy,⁷⁹ the craftsman blends an alloy from three prior mixtures. I will refer to the product of stage α as (the) '*soul-material*'. He will go on to divide the material in stage β into precise portions and then recombine them. In stages γ and δ he will give the World-soul its final structure and set it in motion. I will focus in my discussion on stages α and β .

2a. Step α : Creating 'Soul material'

There are two steps in the creation of *soul-material*:

α 1. The forming of *soul-material*'s three components;

α 2. The mixing of those three components into *soul-material*.

The three components formed or united in α 1 are intermediate forms (*en mesōi...eidos* - ἐν μέσῳ...εἶδος) of Being (*ousias* – οὐσίᾱς), the Same (*tēs te t'autou* – τῆς τε ταυτοῦ), and the Different/Other (*tēs tou heterou* – τῆς τοῦ ἑτέρου). Let us call these intermediate

⁷⁷ Zeyl either has three or four stages. He says three, but then enumerates four. He divides my stage 2 into two steps, one in which the seven main, geometrical portions are cut (1, 2, 4, 8, 3, 9, 27) and the next the filling in of the intervals between them. He then combines mine stages 3 and 4 into one step for the creation of the circles of the same and different. He gives a separate account of their motions. Zeyl [2000] 20-22.

⁷⁸ Grube [1932].

⁷⁹ Zedda [2000] following Brisson [1974]

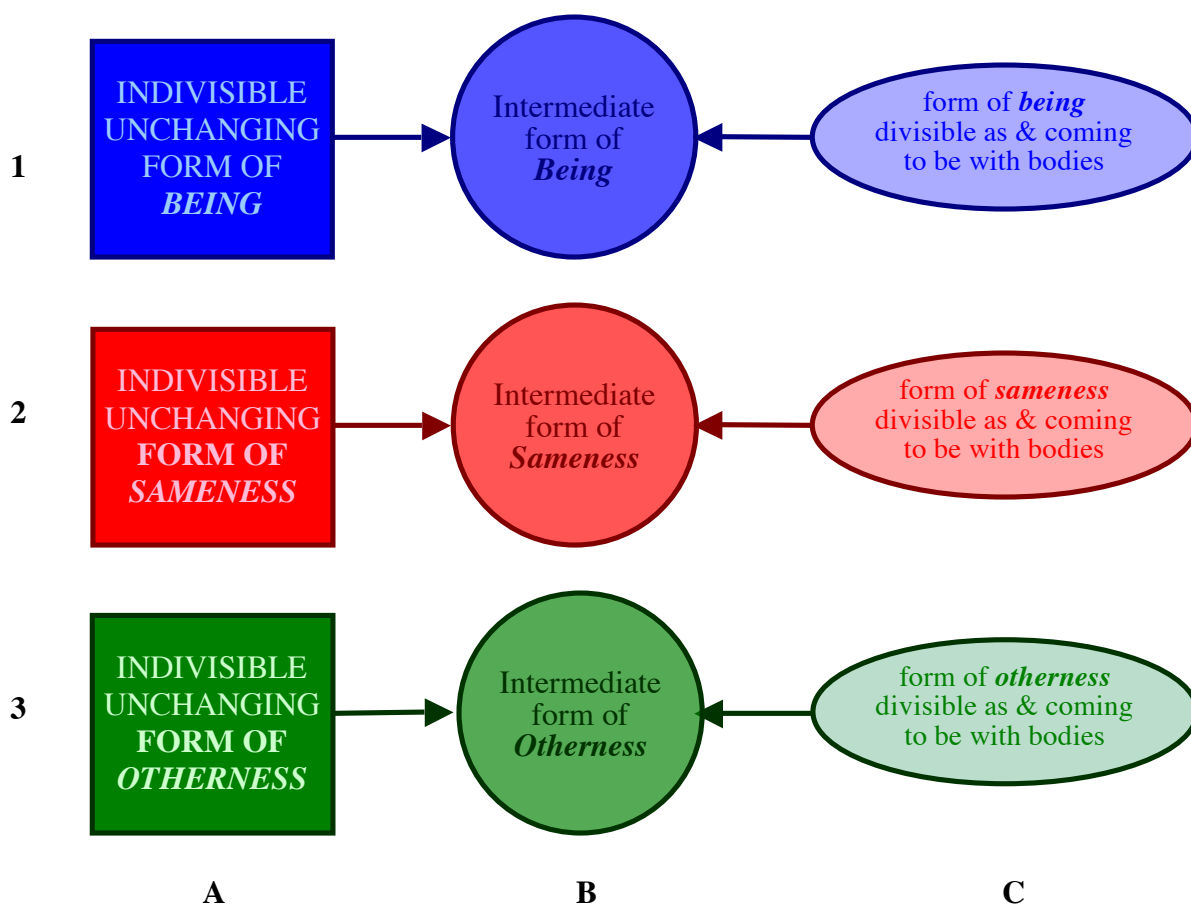
forms of the three respective natures: “Intermediate Being”, “Intermediate Sameness”, and “Intermediate Otherness”.⁸⁰

The intermediate forms are “in between” (*en mesōi* – ἐν μέσῳ) two other, more primary ontological types of their respective natures. Intermediate Being is a mixture made from an always changeless and indivisible form of Being (A) and a kind of being that comes to be amidst bodies and is divisible as bodies are (C).

In the same manner as with Being, an intermediate form of Sameness is made from an always changeless and indivisible form of Sameness and a divisible, generated sameness. An intermediate form of Otherness is made in just the same way from two primary forms of Otherness, one indivisible and the other divisible.

⁸⁰ Where I am using “form” (in lowercase to distinguish it from the intelligible Forms), Plato calls “form” (*eidos*) at 35a4 and also “nature” (*phusis*-φύσεως) at 35a4 and 35a8, while the “soul stuff” that is the product of mixing the intermediate forms in stage 1b is said to be “one single form” with *idea*-ιδέα for “form”.

Diagram I. Mixing the Basic forms to create the Intermediate Forms (Stage α1)



A and C – The primary types or forms of X

A – τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἐχούσης οὐσίας; τοῦ τε ἀμεροῦς (35a1-2; 5)

B – The Intermediate forms of X that are mixtures of X's two primary forms.

C – τῆς αὖ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένης μεριστῆς; τοῦ κατὰ τὰ σώματα μεριστοῦ (35a2-3; 6)

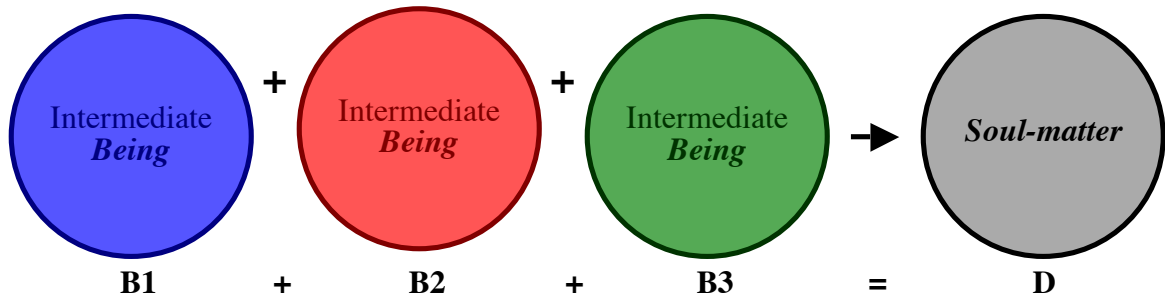
1 – Forms of Being

2 – Forms of Sameness

3 – Forms of Otherness

The second step of stage one is the mixture of the three intermediate forms (B1, B2 and B3 on the diagram) into the new mixture of ‘Soul material’ (D).

Diagram II. Mixing the Intermediate Forms to make Soul-matter (Stage α2)



The narrative of Stage One is straight-forward: first we create three intermediate forms by mixing primary forms and then we thoroughly mix these three intermediate forms together. Unfortunately, the meaning of the passage will remain obscure unless we can understand what these primary and intermediate forms are and what it means to say that they are mixed.

In the *Sophist* at 254d^{ff} there is a discussion of the five Forms that are ‘the greatest of the forms’ (*megista tōn genōn* – Μέγιστα τῶν γενῶν). These are Forms in the familiar Platonic sense, and they are the greatest kinds because they incorporate or are connected to all the other lesser Forms. The five greatest kinds mentioned are: Being, the Same, the Other, Motion, and Rest. Every Form is related to the Form of Being in so far as it is. Each Form is related to the Same in so far as it is the same as itself, and to the Other in so far as it is different than all Forms other than itself. These three Forms also ground all propositions. Being must be invoked to say of anything that it is. To predicate of anything one must invoke Sameness, for to say that X is Y is to say that X is the same as Y in some respect. To make a denial is to invoke otherness for to say X is not Y is

really to say that X is something other than Y. Even to say ‘X is not,’ turns out to be an invocation of otherness rather than absolute Non-Being.

A1, A2 and A3 the indivisible and always unchanging forms of Being, Sameness and Otherness, ought to be understood as the first three great Forms discussed in *the Sophist*. Earlier in the *Timaeus* at 27d5-28b2, Being and Becoming were distinguished precisely by being without change or constantly in change. So the changeless forms of Being, Sameness and Otherness in this passage should be understood as unchanging Being, i.e. the Forms. As further evidence that A1, A2 and A3 should be understood as the *Forms* of Being, Sameness and Otherness, note that at *Parm.* 131c2ff it is shown that the Forms cannot be divided up into parts, so one way that Plato differentiates the Forms from things that come to be is in virtue of their indivisibility. To summarize, the primary, unmixed types in the A column are Forms. And, in particular, three of the greatest Forms: Being, Sameness and Otherness (a.k.a. Difference).

The identification of the A column with those Forms is quite widely accepted. But two other points are far more controversial: 1) What are the forms in the C column? 2) What can the mixture of the As with the Cs possibly mean if, as it seems very likely, the As are intelligible Forms? The problem here is that the intelligible Forms do not “descend” out of the intelligible realm. So presumably, they cannot mix or directly interact with anything other than the other Forms (*Tim.* 52c).

If indivisibility is characteristic of the intelligible Forms, then divisibility, in a variety of senses, is characteristic of things that come to be. The forms of being, sameness and otherness in Column C are characterized as being divisible or

“partitionable”, coming to be among bodies, and being divisible after the manner of bodies.

Just as in the fourfold division in the *Philebus* where coming to be is identified as a composite of the unlimited and limits, so too, in the *Timaeus*, becoming is the product of two other factors (*Phl.* 25b5ff; *Tim.* 50c7-d4; 51e6-52b5). The first of these factors is the Forms, which are like the father; the second is the Receptacle, like the mother, and becoming is like their offspring. Things that come to be are appearances. Prior to the intervention of the Demiurge we are told that there still were appearances in the receptacle, including faint traces of such things as the elements, which appear in it now (53a-b).⁸¹

The Receptacle is a natural reflecting pool for the Forms, but it reflects in three dimensions rather than as a flat surface. Some “image” of the Forms will always be reflected into space (51a-b)⁸² easily rippled and incapable of reflecting anything stable without the structures that the Demiurge imprints it with during creation.

The C Column forms of Being, Sameness and Difference have sometimes been identified as the pre-creation reflections of Being, Sameness and Difference. This is usually taken to mean either that they represent the primordial ‘traces’ of soul or of body. Plutarch held the soul view (rather infamously for it caused him to posit an evil primeval soul). Recently Von Perger has defended it in a more moderate form.⁸³

⁸¹ But fire, water, etc. were “only traces” of what they are now (i.e. after their organization by the Demiurge. At 69b we are told that “none of them qualified at all for the names we now call them by, names such as fire, water...”. Cf. Broadie.

⁸² Or, put another way, the receptacle always “receives all things and partakes in a most perplexing way in what is intelligible, a thing extremely difficult to comprehend.”

⁸³ Plutarch *DAPT.* §§3-28. von Perger [1997]. For evaluations of von Perger’s view as being Plutarchian, see Gerson [1998], Opsomer [1999].

The alternative “trace” view is that these forms are the [forms of the] traces of bodies in the flux. The divisible, generated form of being is characterized as the form of the being (*ousia* οὐσία) “alongside [the] bodies generated (and) divisible”, (35a6) so too with sameness and otherness and the forms of them that are “as per [the] bodies divisible”. There is some leeway in how to take the *prepositions* + “*the bodies*” that I have indicated in these glosses with double-underline, although I stand by my translations and their interpretive consequences. A different rendering such as Zeyl’s, “their corporeal, divisible [counterparts]” for the second gloss, implies that these forms of being, sameness, and difference are the corporeal forms of these three categories. Hence, we get the position that these components are the pre-creative traces of bodies.

Bodies proper are only created after souls, when the Demiurge uses basic geometrical forms (triangles) to construct planes and from planes the platonic solids which are the “so-called ‘elemental’ ” bodies - tetrahedron=fire, octahedron=air, icosahedron=water, cube=earth - and the heavens=dodecahedron.⁸⁴ However, there are “traces” of these so-called elements in the flux that exists prior to the cosmogony (53a-b).⁸⁵ There are a number of strong but unnecessarily abstruse arguments that can be made against such ‘trace view’ interpretations. However, for the sake of expedience, I will present what is the simplest but also most powerful philosophical objection to them.

These elemental traces are not themselves traces of being, sameness, and otherness, or at least they are not obviously so. Therefore first challenge to such a view is that it must argue for their identity, or else manage to develop an account of what the

⁸⁴ Only “so-called ‘elements’” because the triangles are the true, basic constituents. The triangles and the planes that they form together are non-bodily components of fire, air, et al, which are the first bodies.

⁸⁵ But fire, water, etc. were “only traces” of what they are now (i.e. after their organization by the Demiurge. At 69b we are told that “none of them qualified at all for the names we now call them by, names such as fire, water....” Cf. Broadie [2003].

being, sameness, and otherness of traces are. In truth, such accounts make very little sense. “Traces” in the Receptacle make meaningful sense when we are talking about imitations of Forms such as Fire or Water, Timaeus’ examples at 48bff. A brief appearance of something hot and dry or cold and wet in the disordered Receptacle, or something more stable such as the bodies we now know as fire and water, can both be understood as the imitations of the Forms of Fire and Water respectively.⁸⁶ But there is no particular appearance or fragment that represents Being, Sameness, or Otherness. What is a trace of otherness or a flicker of sameness? All that the divisible forms of Being, Sameness and Otherness could be is *the general manner in which something is, is the same as, or is other than, something else in the Receptacle or the place of bodies.*

So what is it for something to be, rather than not to be, in the Receptacle? For something to be in the Receptacle is for it to appear there. That means it is an appearance in the domain of change and *in space*. Why call this divisible being? My answer is that things that are *in space* are extended. Thus they can be measured and partitioned into different parts occupying different spaces. The Form of water exists in no place and at no particular time. There is no bottom of its depths, top of its surfaces, no Pacific nor Atlantic region. But any physical body of water, that is an appearance of the Form of Water, has spatial dimensions. It takes up a certain volume in a vessel of a certain shape, it can be divided into different regions, and one can even scoop out a cup of it and create a distinct portion of water. “As per bodies divisible” should be understood to mean spatially extended and, at least in the case of solid bodies, physically divisible, perhaps even dissoluble.

⁸⁶ 69b-c. These are, as at 52b-c, *merely* traces. They do not even qualify for the kind terms that their structured replacements have.

The C column forms are characterized not only by their divisibility, but also by their having been generated (gignomenēs γιγνομένης). This implies conditions other than spatiality: i.e. temporal conditions, an ontological status inferior to that of timeless being, and causal dependence. If this type of being means appearing at some place (and time), then sameness of this type means being at the same place or belonging to the same extension (at the same time) as something else, or the establishment of one appearance being the same as itself by being in one place or being continuous (sunexei) at a given time.

Earlier, when discussing the indivisible type of sameness, we noted that every Form partakes of unchanging sameness insofar as it is self-identical, i.e. the same as itself. Likewise, all Forms partake of Otherness insofar as they are not identical with Forms other than themselves. But since there is no space or time for the Forms, they are not distinguished from one another by being at different places or by existing at different times. Rather, they are individuated from one another logically or in virtue of having different content. In the case of literal physical containment, one thing is encompassed within the space of another, its container. But, in what we call, by analog, ‘logical containment’, being contained or not is a matter of size, shape and place; it is not a matter of shared space but of shared universal attributes.

So, to return to our divisible changing forms of Sameness and Otherness, we shall say, first of all, that they are the conditions of individuation by means of space. I mean that changing, divisible sameness is the sameness of one thing taking up some space or being spatially continuous across some extension (for some period of time) and otherness or difference as being in different spaces or being discontinuous (at a given time). We

call two appearances the same or parts of the same thing, with respect to space, if they fall within the same place or within a continuous extension (at the same time). Otherness of the divisible, changing kind is the individuation of one appearance from another by virtue of being at different places at a given time.

Moreover, spatial sameness and otherness can identify two qualitatively distinct appearances with belonging to the same body. For instance, if the intense heat and the bright red-yellow color always stay together, whether moving about or remaining stationary, then they might be recognized to correspond to one body, e.g. a particular flame. Spatial sameness and otherness can also distinguish two qualitatively identical appearances, at a given time. For instance, if at this moment there is a green light *right here*, and a light of the same brightness, hue, and saturation *over there*, then it is another light over there, and not the same light as the one that is right here.

C forms have a *phenomenal* nature as well. The red-yellow color of the flame and the heat of the flame do not differ from one another by *BEING* two different Forms; they differ by “being” the appearances of two different Forms. Qualitative differentiations between appearances in the Receptacle and the capacity for seeing them as belonging to kinds ultimately are due to the indivisible and timeless kind of sameness and otherness of the Forms. Nonetheless, the differences and identities of things that come to be are not “really real,” but are merely “apparent”, in the sense that they are not the eternal and immutable kinds of sameness or difference that hold between the Forms, but are alterable states of appearances that can become more or less like one another and that at any given time come in degrees. The significance of this is that the form of being that is divisible and

generated actually means the mode of existence of the things that come to be. That is to say it is their ontological state.

This form of being can be called “appearance” or “becoming”. “Appearance” might be preferable, since “becoming” can refer to either a generic ontological level (in contrast to BEING) *or* to a more specific manner of existence within this level: ordered and stable becoming post-creation, i.e. the persistence of relatively stable bodies, souls, etc. that result from the imposition of order on the unlimited by limits. This latter, narrower, and more honorific sense of “becoming” is to be contrasted to the flux (actual or hypothetical) of pre-creation. Anything that “has” the C-column form of being is an appearance. The corresponding form of sameness is the sameness of one appearance “being” the same as itself, or an appearance being of the same kind as another appearance. The corresponding form of otherness is that of one appearance being distinct from another appearance or an appearance being of a kind other than another appearance’s kind.

These appearances are most formally defined, ontologically, as things that come to be or have come to be. What does “being” something that has come-to-be entail? To revisit Timaeus’ metaphysical proem, it means, among other things already mentioned, to have a cause. Such generated things are subject to change. That means they can (conceivably) begin-to-be and cease-to-be. They can combine with or divide from other things thus changing their status of sameness or otherness with respect to that with which they combine or from which they separate. They can be altered, thus changing the kinds of appearances with which they are the same or different. Finally, since they are also in

space, they can change with respect to their place, that is to say that they or their parts can move.

These metaphysical characteristics of C forms lead to correlative epistemological characteristics. Multiple appearances can only be distinguished as different-in-kind from one another or be sorted into the same kind (under one term or concept) by knowledge of the Forms. Yet, since the so-called “sameness” (qualitative or otherwise) that holds between appearances belonging to kind $\{\phi\}$ is both mutable and multifarious, the epistemic status that we have of such judgments as ‘this thing x “is” ϕ ’ can only be opinion. As we are told in the *Theaetetus*, and as we are reminded in the *Timaeus*, we should not say that x “is” ϕ if we wish to be metaphysically precise, rather we should say that x “comes-to-be” ϕ , or x is “becoming” ϕ .

It is not so with the Forms. In the case of the Form Φ , which makes all the members $\{\phi\}$ be ϕ , its identity with itself is one single and changeless thing. Its differences from other Forms also are each unique and invariable. Φ is Φ , where “is” requires no qualification. Φ is not Θ , nor is it Ψ . Φ is other than Θ and other than Ψ without qualification. Hence the judgment that Φ is Φ is timeless, certain, and unshakeable knowledge, while the judgment that x is ϕ is at best a true opinion, since it concerns a temporary, contingent, and unstable state of affairs. Thus, the kind of cognition that corresponds to cases of divisible being, sameness, and otherness differs from the superior kind of cognition corresponding to their indivisible, A column counterparts.

The final aspect of divisible being, sameness, and otherness that must be discussed is the temporal one. Throughout my discussion of the spatial and phenomenal

nature of these forms I at various times included glosses such as, *at the same time* or *at different times*. I now wish to draw attention to these glosses and their significance and to address a potentially serious problem in their usage. Generated being is being in time. This statement comes with a caveat. Time, according to Plato, is the measure of motion. There is motion in the pre-creation, but it is not sufficiently regular or enduring to be measurable motion. For there to be *time* in the sense Plato intends it, the planets and stars had to be created and set in their regular but different motions with the earth at their center (presumably as a stable point of reference). Hence the planets are referred to as the “guardians of time” (see §II.4 Below).

If one accepts the *E-reading*, then there are things that come to be and pass away in the Receptacle prior to the introduction of time with the creation of the heavens. The three basic ontological categories, Being, Becoming, and the Receptacle, all have existed eternally and prior to the creation of the heavens (as an event) (52d). The creation of the World-soul and any other divine souls that move the heavens occurs prior to the creation of the heavens and the celestial time keepers. In this sense the soul is not generated before time, and the “components” of the soul material are prior to time’s creation. If one takes the creation event to be an event that occurs instantaneously, with soul’s generation being only a logically prior moment, then one can say that the soul, like the rest of the created world, was not generated *in time* but *with time*.⁸⁷

Still, the generated forms of being, sameness, and difference must preexist the creation on an *E-reading*. Therefore, we must be careful in how we gloss “temporal”. If we distinguish “temporal” from being “in time”, then we can say that before the

⁸⁷ So Augustine says in *DCD* XI.6: “non est factus mundus in tempore, sed cum tempore”.

Demiurge made the heavens, generated forms are *temporal* but not *in time*, if by “temporal” we mean the following: being in space and in/among movement so as to be capable of being in time when there are appropriate markers for the measurement of motion. Something “temporal” has the basic metaphysical requirements for coming-to-be in time, it is in a space where there is motion/change. If it is not yet “in time” it is only because it awaits the introduction of stable markers against which to measure relative motion.

This is not a problem on the *P-reading*, which, especially in modern interpretive debates, is largely motivated by the paradox of a “time before time” that the *E-reading* introduces. However, the *P-reading* takes the components of the soul-material’s mixture not as ever existing on their own, *per se*, but as constant and conceptually distinguishable factors in the ontology of things. The *P-reading* could agree to the sense of “temporal” given immediately above, but could add that the potential to be “in time” that the temporal has, is, in fact, always actualized.

So what is the *temporal* nature of the generated, C forms of being, sameness, and difference? Their foils in this regard, the Forms, including the A column (Being, Sameness, and Difference) are atemporal. The Forms are not merely eternal, in the sense of lasting for all time, they are “sempiternal”, a special term Plato coins in the *Timaeus*, meaning not subject to temporal progression at all. Terms like “before”, “now”, “after”, “older”, and “younger” have no meaning when applied to the Forms. To be, in the generated, divisible sense of being, is such as to be for some period of time (when there is time), whether it be an instant, a definite length of time, or for as long as there is a cosmos, i.e. for all time.

Generated sameness and otherness means to be the same or other under temporal conditions. This means that something generated can either be the same thing at one time and still the same at another or else different at that different point in time. Furthermore, “being” at same and different times serves in the individuation of objects spatially, as well. *At a given point in time*, for x to appear in one place and y to appear in another place is for x to be other than y . On the other hand, if, *at a given time*, x and y appear together in the exact same place, then, other things being equal, they are, if not the same appearance, then appearances belonging to the same generated object. Furthermore, if one or more appearances are in different places at *different times*, it is not necessary that they are different from one another. Locomotion is equivalent to the fact that an appearance/generated thing can be the same as itself while being at different places, if its respective places differ as time unfolds. For one and the same thing to be in different places at different times is motion. If everything stood still, then spatial differentiation would entirely suffice for individuation; different places would imply different things.

Lastly, “divisibility” in the simplest and most literal sense is the capacity for being divided, which means being separated. When two things are divided, it means that, having formerly been together in some respect, they are now made separate from one another in that respect. When we say that one thing is “divided” we mean that what was formerly one thing is now split into distinct things that are *apart* from one another. To be *apart* is to be as if from partition.

To sum up, the divisible, generated forms of being, sameness, and otherness, are what it is to be, be the same as, or to be other than things that are spatially extended, temporal, apparent, in motion, mutable, and only opinable.

If these forms of being, sameness, and difference are not particular “things” or “traces” in the receptacle but are the general conditions of being, ceasing to be, and being individuated for generated, divisible things, then why aren’t the A column forms also just the *general conditions* of being and being individuated among the Forms? Why are they the three specific Forms of BEING, SAMENESS, and OTHERNESS? My answer is that they are both; for they are equivalent. We described abstractly what it was to be an intelligible Form – not in space, never changing, etc. But each of the Forms *is* (and *is* in those ways), by association with the Form of BEING. Similarly they are the same as themselves and not the same as others by virtue of their two place relations to the Forms of Sameness and Otherness.

This does mark a distinction even among the Forms, between being BEING, on the one hand, and having Being (by association with BEING), on the other hand. This is the distinction between *per se* and *per aliud* predications.⁸⁸ That distinction being granted, we will slightly revise what was said earlier, and say that the A column represents *having* being, sameness, and otherness, rather than being those Forms, *per se*. Since “mixture” is metaphorical in this case, anyway, and the Forms cannot descend to interact with or mix with non-Beings, we always had to suppose that their contribution to the mixture meant considering and then blending what these Forms represent as ways of Being, Being the Same as, or Being Other than.

Now, let us see what we arrive at when we take the intermediates between these three pairs of forms, and then mix together the three mixtures at stage $\alpha 2$. In Diagram 1 we can see the first step of mixing towards reaching soul-material. Each A form is mixed

⁸⁸ Frede [1992].

with its respective C form to yield an intermediate B form. That means that means that what gets “realized” in this step are the intermediate kinds of being, of sameness, and of otherness. None of these three intermediate forms can be realized (i.e. be something that exists) without the others, even though they are all conceptually distinct.

It will be easier to come to understand the meaning of the three intermediate forms when considered together rather than separately. Therefore, we should note that upon the creation of the three B column Forms, they are then mixed together into what I call the soul material, as per Diagram II. The nature of the soul-material output (D in diagram II) reflects the respective natures of the intermediate forms of Being, Sameness, and Otherness, so spelling out D should help explicate B1, B2, and B3 as well.

Below, I have given a table of the various aspects of the conditions of Being, Sameness, and Otherness for the two primary kinds of forms, and then present the mixture of the intermediate forms in between them (D), which characterizes the soul’s ontological nature: a created, but immortal and spatially extended, indivisible thing that depends on a cause and can comprehend both the intelligible and sensible because of its mixed provenance.

Table 3: Ontology of the Soul, considered as a mixture at *Tim. 35a-8*

Aspect	Indivisible forms (A) →	Intermediate forms (B)	← Divisible forms (C)
Space and Partition	Nowhere, not extended, mereologically indivisible. There are multiple, separate Forms, but they are woven together logically.	A soul is extended in space, but mereologically it is indivisible. Extends from one place to another, but always as the same continuous whole. Soul (material) is divisible <i>mathematically</i> , containing limits, but such <i>proportions</i> maintain its unity. Souls are numerous.	In space, extended, divisible into parts. Scatters into different places). There is indefinitely many things coming to be and passing away.
Creation (i.e. Generation), Cause, and Destruction	Always IS. Uncreated, Indestructible Eternal (or, more precisely, “Sempiternal”)	ER: Created in the past, dependent on a cause, indestructible. PR: Not created some time ago, (always) dependent on its creator, indestructible	Created by a cause, destructible. Instantaneous and ephemeral. Never “IS”. (Without creation never even appears <i>thus</i> or <i>so</i> .)*
Motion or Change	Always the same as itself (in the same way) and unchanging, always different from others in the same ways. Completely at rest.	Always moving in the same, constant, and orderly way; moving itself and others; self-centered rotation in one place. £ Can be altered. \$	Always changing from one state to another, moved by others and moving others rectilinearly and haphazardly. Can be in revolution around one place if moved by a (good) soul.
Temporality ^o	“Sempiternal”. Atemporal; no temporal terms apply.	Temporal but also Eternal as ‘for all time’, meaning... ER: Beginning “before” or with time, lasts forever. PR: Always was, is now, and will ever be (i.e. has no beginning or end, but has “befores” and “afters”).	Temporal and temporary. Temporal meaning in space and in/among movement so as to be capable of being in time, and, when in time, not for <i>all</i> time.
As object of cognition	Intelligible. Comprehended by intellect as with an account (logos).	Not grasped by the senses, but by intellect. (Intelligible in the epistemic sense). Perhaps not an object of dialectic (?) €	Held as opinions (reached) with the senses.
As subject of cognitions.	Not a subject. (If it were, it would only know intelligibles).	The only proper subject of cognitions, both <i>intelligible</i> and <i>sensible</i> .	Not a subject. (If it were, it would only know sensibles)

Table notes:⁸⁹

⁸⁹ * - On a trace view this is the case for divisible forms *per se*. (If one takes the divisible form of being to be the being of the Receptacle, then it is eternal, but that reading is ruled out by the fact that this is the divisible, *generated* form of being, while the Receptacle is ungenerated).

^o - See III.2.C.4.f above. ‘Temporal’ means so disposed as to count as “being” (or becoming) ‘in time’ if there are adequate ‘time keepers’ present to create and maintain time. Something is temporal in virtue of its “being” (or becoming) in the domain of space and change (i.e. the Receptacle).

£ - This is the ideal case for a soul, and it holds for the World-soul’s circles. The astral gods’ souls rotate constantly, but the circle of the same rotates them, with their bodies. The true, immortal part of the soul belonging to “mortals” revolves more or less perfectly (i.e. in a constant circular manner) as it is more or less pure.

In the *Timaeus* and in the *Laws*, the soul is counted as something generated. This does not mean that it must be understood to have a temporal beginning, as per the literalist reading of the cosmogony, but it must have a cause, and it falls in the realm of bodies, i.e. it is in the receptacle. The soul is three dimensional. Johansen has demonstrated this decisively ([2000]), and we will show one more reason for believing it in the section on β stage of the $\Pi\Psi$'s construction.

Proper, rational motion is motion guided by intellect (*nous*). This is intellectual faculty is “nourished” by having a view of the Forms (*Phdr.* 247d, 248b-c). Speaking literally, the rational or intellectual [part of a] soul, functions properly by apprehending intelligible Beings, i.e. the Forms. The soul is better able to move in a perfectly continuous and self-consistent motion by consideration of objects that are totally stable, and the orderly motion of the heavens can in turn inspire improvement in the quality of motion in the marred circles of human intellect. For this reason, if the souls of the gods are to move the heavens regularly, they must know the Forms. Moreover, for the created gods to create mortal bodies and mortal parts of the soul, it is necessary that they know the Forms of these species. The maker, the Demiurge, charges the lesser gods with this task in order to make the cosmos more like its model (see §§II.5-6 below). The model is the generic form of “animal” or “living being” and it contains (logically) within itself all the various species (and sub-species) of animals.⁹⁰ Therefore, the cosmos, which is a single, living being, should contain (spatially) inside of itself all the other living beings of

¢ - Even the World-soul “shudders” when in contact with its objects, and so it goes through changing states of cognition, at least in the case of the sensible objects of belief that the circle of the different knows. (The true understanding of intelligibles by the circle of the same could be constant and unvarying). The true (immortal parts of) souls of mortals can be bent and twisted by corrupting contact with mortal bodies and the mortal parts of the soul.

€ That is to say that it is not an intelligible in the metaphysical sense, where this means a “really, real Being” such as one of the Forms. It is intelligible in the epistemic sense of being the object of intellect.

⁹⁰ Wood [1968], Parry [1991], Thomas [2003], Thein [2006], Sedley [2007].

all the specific kinds. This requires the created gods to be able to know species Forms. Indeed, the *Timaeus* contains an argument that general or universal knowledge or anything that is superior to mere belief, requires that there be the Forms (and, obviously, that they be known to whomever has such knowledge).

On the other hand, if the divine souls are to inhabit and care for and move bodies, and if they are to take a care for mortals and the good or bad that they do, then they must have knowledge of sensible particulars (even if not through organs of sense such as eyes or ears). Souls do know intelligibles *and* sensibles. What does this have to do with its constitution? There is a strong indication of the doctrine of like knows like in the *Timaeus*. The World-soul is assigned to knowing the Forms and another to having true beliefs about bodily things. The soul's ability to take cognizance of these things depends on its mixed birth, i.e. on its composition from forms akin to the Forms and forms akin to dispersible bodies. To account for the possibility of both intelligible and sensible cognition is one motivating factor for the soul-matter's composition being what it is. Having an unchanging form of Being, Sameness, and Otherness gives the soul (the $\Pi\Psi$ especially) the capacity to make all the basic forms of judgments (existence statements, predications, and negations) regarding intelligible or universal things:

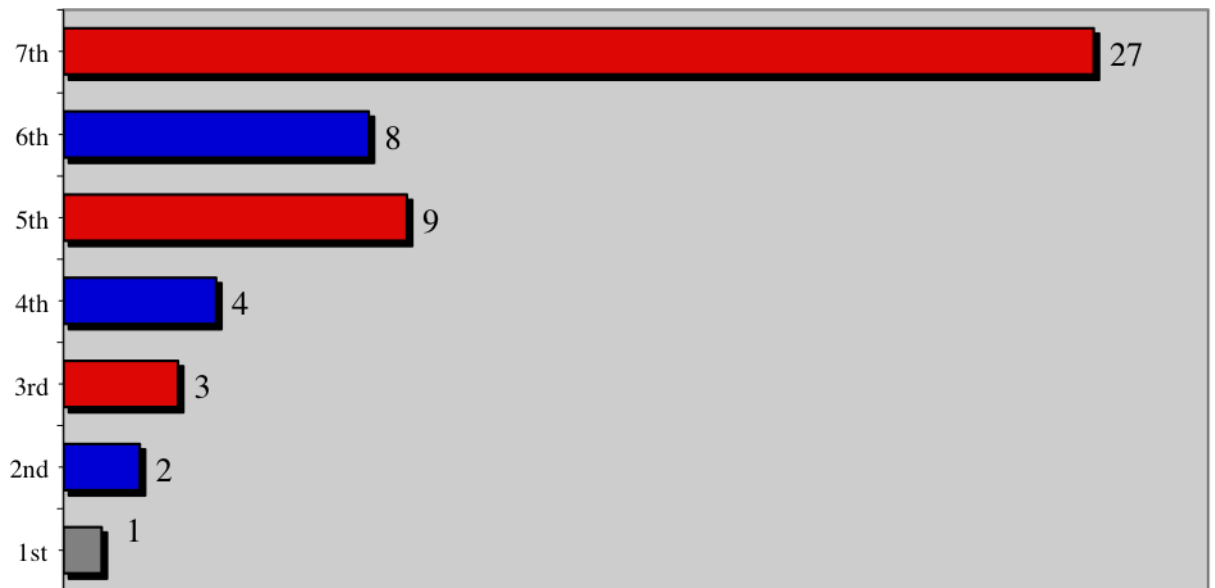
Table 4: Epistemological Import of the Soul's Mixed Forms for Judgment

Judgment Form	What always is / Indivisible forms	What is always becoming / Divisible forms
Existential Being	"There <i>is</i> something, Justice." Justice has <u>timeless, eternal <i>Being</i></u>	"Socrates is." For now there " is " this thing, Socrates, <u>although this can and will change</u>]
Predication Same	"Justice is Good." Justice <u>always was, is, and will be</u> the Same as the Good (in some respect)	"Socrates is pale." For now Socrates " is the same as " pale (in <u>some degree(s) of paleness</u> , not <u>PALENESS itself</u> , in <u>some places</u> on his body) <u>until this changes</u>]
Negation Other	"Justice is not the interest of the stronger." Justice <u>always was, is, and will be</u> Other than the interest of the stronger	"Socrates is not sitting." [For now Socrates " is other than " sitting (in <u>some disposition</u> that is not sitting, e.g. standing, <u>but not STANDING itself</u>) <u>until this changes</u> when he sits]

2b. Step β : Apportionment and internal binding of the Soul material with ratios

The second major step in the creation of the World-soul, β is the division of the soul-material into portions that are in exact mathematical proportion to one another and adding them to each other to make a single compound. In $\beta 1$ the Demiurge takes an initial, unit portion and then adds portions by doubling the size of the first and then doubling the resulting double and then doubling that latter double) and by tripling the size of the first and then tripling the resulting triple (and then tripling that latter triple).

Diagram III. The First Seven Portions (Stage $\beta 1$)



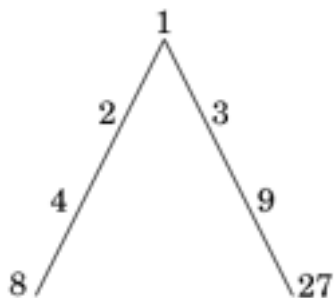
This results in six new portions on top of the first, He introduces these portions in the following order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 8, 27. The first sequence, that of the even numbered portions (second, fourth, and sixth), colored in blue in Diagram III, consists of portions in the ratio of the double, i.e. each portion is twice the last. The other sequence consists of the odd numbered portions (third, fifth, and seventh),⁹¹ colored in red, which stand to one

⁹¹ The 'first' does not count as odd because one is not a number.

another in the ratio of the triple, i.e. each portion is thrice the last. The double and triple are selected because they will lead to musical scales and because they correspond to the first even and first odd numbers. (In Greek mathematical thought, one is not considered a number (*arithmos* - ἀριθμός).

Since antiquity this progression has been split into two sequences for the sake of clarification.⁹² The preferred method of display is a lambda, Λ , its apex being the first portion and its two “legs” representing the two sequences.

Diagram IV. The “Lambda” (Stage $\beta 1$)



The Demiurge extends both sequences to four terms by beginning with the unit as his first term and then adding three new terms that each double or triple their predecessor. In other words, the sequence of double intervals goes to the eightfold portion as follows: 1, 2, 4, 8; the sequence of triple intervals goes to a portion twenty-seven times the magnitude of the first portion as follows: 1, 3, 9, 27. Notice that the sequences proceed to the first even cube (or cubic ratio), and the first odd cube (or cubic ratio); we would express these as 2^3 and 3^3 , or, if we called the unit x , and so denoted the subsequent portions as proportionate to the unit, we would have $(2x)^3$ and $(3x)^3$ or $8x^3$ and $27x^3$. The Greeks would call these the ‘cube of the double’ and the ‘cube of the triple’. With the apportionment of the doubles and the triples up to their cubes, stage $\beta 1$ is complete.

⁹² It was not uncontroversial among the Platonists whether this was acceptable and properly reconstructed the logic behind the Demiurge’s procedure. Plutarch *DAPT* 1027A §29ff.

This procedure will serve the Demiurge's creation in three major ways: First, it will ensure that the soul can be extended in three dimensions and so correspond to or occupy bodies (discussed in II.3). Second, it will insure that the soul is as perfectly unified as possible, for mathematical ratios serve to bind together their terms, *literally*, as well as in the figurative and familiar mathematical sense (31c-32a). Third, it will allow the circle of the different (one of the two circles/spheres the $\Pi\Psi$ is fashioned in to in step γ) to be divided into seven different circles, one for each of the planets.

The Demiurge divides the mixture that is the soul-material into portions. Each portion that is so divided is itself a mixture constituted by all three intermediate forms (from step $\alpha 2$). Thus the portions do not differ in their quality of their composition, only in their total magnitude. Looking back on the ontology of the mixture, we see one more reason why it is essential that the soul-material have some share of divisible being to be so divided. On the other hand, it really is intermediate, not divisible being, which is being dealt with. This is necessary for the portions of the soul to form an *indivisible* whole. Furthermore, the soul-material must have sameness so that the various portions can be *commensurable* according to the same unit and so that the different portions can all be "reunited" into one continuous whole. Otherness is needed so that there are different portions in different amounts.

The portions reached by the initial intervals of the double and the triple are only the foundations for the rest of the apportionment, intervals within the intervals must be allotted. However, some significant work has already occurred by this sub-stage. Three points in particular require mention:

As was said, two and three are the first even and odd numbers respectively. The

double and the triple introduce the basic natures of evenness and oddity. They are representative of all numbers, at least in a symbolic manner, and are used to generate infinitude in the *Parmenides* (*Parm.* 143d1-144a9). I say ‘at least symbolically’ because they cannot generate all subsequent numbers, i.e. no primes, only an indefinitely large number of numbers.

The proportions of the portions in the two sequences stand in geometric ratios. That is to say that the number between 1 and 4 is their geometrical mean, and the number between 2 and 8 is their respective geometrical mean. The geometrical mean, Y, between X and Z is so defined: $\underline{X}:\underline{Y} = \underline{Y}:\underline{Z}$. The sequence of double intervals is 1, 2, 4, 8 and that of triple intervals is 1, 3, 9, 27. There are two geometrical means (2 and 4) between the extremes of the even sequence (1 and 8). Likewise there are two geometrical means (3 and 9) between the extremes of the odd sequence (1 and 27). For, $1/\underline{2} = \underline{2}/4$, $2/\underline{4} = \underline{4}/8$, and likewise $1/\underline{3} = \underline{3}/9$, and $3/\underline{9} = \underline{9}/27$. In both sequences, we have geometrical progressions with two intermediate terms between the extremes. Having two intermediate terms between extremes is precisely what Timaeus identifies as being necessary for having solids or three-dimensional objects in his argument for the four elements (see below in §II.3). This suggests that just as the soul-material in stage α was made so as to be capable of motion and interaction with bodies, the soul composition of stage β is designed to be able to spread out in three dimensions and to be able to “take over” or guide corporeal compositions of all four elements. Furthermore, the “bonds” between them are strongest and best when they are in geometrical proportion, i.e. when $A:B::B:C$, or in the case of four terms (for solids), $A:B::B:C::C:D / D:C::C:B::B:A$, so that $A:C::B:D / D:B::C:A$, or, putting the means in the extreme positions of the formulated

ratios, $C:A::D:B / B:D::C:A$.

The Demiurge next adds portions that form the harmonic means between the portions (step β_2), and after that he adds portions that are the arithmetic means between their terms (step β_3). When arrayed in order of size, these portions are such that each is either $4/3$, $3/2$, or $9/8$ the size of the previous portion. In musical terms, they stand in the ratios of the fourth, the perfect fifth, and the tone, respectively. There is still “room” to place tonally proportionate lengths, i.e. multiples of $9/8$, between successive portions terms that are in $4/3$ ratio to one another, and he thusly fills in these intervals until he reaches a limit of $256/243$, the so-called tetrachord (step β_4).

Most of the philosophically relevant gleanings from these procedures have already been mentioned, so there is little need to belabor our progress by wading through all the mathematical details of stages β_2 -4.

Diagram V. Stages β_2 and β_3 Illustrated with the Even Sequence of Ratios

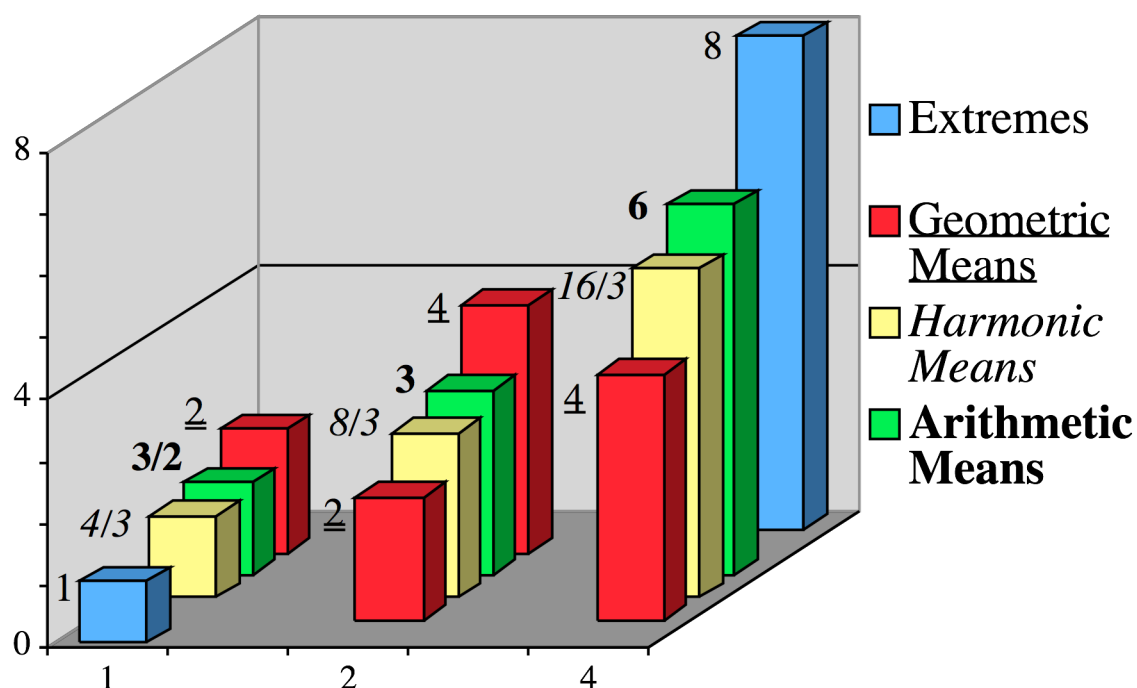


Diagram V presents the results of the work of stages $\beta.2$ and $\beta.3$ on the interval of the double. If, we do the same for the triple interval and we then take both series and combine them, removing any duplications, we have the following: 1, $4/3$, $3/2$, 2, $8/3$, 3, 4, $9/2$, $16/3$, **6***, 8, 9, $27/2$, **18**, 27.⁹³

In step $\beta 4$ The Demiurge further fills each epitritie interval, dividing it with two epogdoic intervals ($9/8$) and a *leimma* or remainder. For example, between 1 and $4/3$ there is $9/8$. There is another number, $9/8$ of $9/8$, which is less than $3/2$, viz. $81/64$. If we were to take $9/8$ of $81/64$ we would have $729/512$, but this is ~ 1.424 which exceeds $4/3$. If we multiply $81/64$ by $3/2$ or $4/3$ we get $243/128$ or $324/192$ both of which exceed $4/3$ as well. So what we have looks like this: 1, $9/8$, $81/64$, ____, $4/3$. If we solve for the geometric ratio between $81/64$ and $4/3$ we will find it to be $256/243$, and this is the tetrachord, very approximate to a semi-tone, and identified in the work of Philolaus.

We can now conclude our discussion of stage β , having already discussed two important reasons for the soul being given the mathematical structure it receives therein: First, it makes the soul three dimensional, by two intermediate geometrical means in both the series of the double and of the triple. Second, such mathematical ratios are the “strongest bonds”. The entirety of the soul-material made in stage α is fully exhausted in stage β by being divided into portions that are recombined into a musical series, sturdily united by proportion and harmony. In stage α three mixtures were made, and then one

⁹³ Each number is in a musically significant proportion to the next number. However not every one is either a perfect fifth ($3/2$), a perfect fourth ($4/3$) (the ‘epitritie’ interval), or a tone of $9/8$ (the ‘epogdoic’ interval). There is an exception: between $9/2$ and $16/3$; there the ratio is $32/27$, which is a minor third. However, this generalization does hold true of the completed intervals of the double and the triple, individually, for then $9/2$ would precede 6 (a ratio of $4/3$). Six, however, was an arithmetic mean in both the sequence of doubles and triples. So it is a mistake to recombine them in determining the epitritie ratios that we have. Indeed, we are told that “ $3/2$, $4/3$, and $9/8$ are the connections in the previous intervals”, that is in the double and triple sequences only, not in their combination. So step $\beta 4$, described immediately hereafter, should be performed *before* recombination of the two series. Many commentaries erroneously recombine them first.

joint mixture was made from these three. In stage β , that same mixture was taken apart and reassembled but with definite and musically beautiful ratios. So that which lacked mathematical structure and was a single unmeasured mass, has now been reconstituted with distinct measurements or “limits”. No doubt they contribute to the unity and immortality of the soul.

Having different intervals seems part of the explanation for how seven different rotations on the plane of the ecliptic can all belong to the circle of the different (see below). Also, the numerous ratios between them are perhaps necessary for there to be all the different ratios of speed or periodicity between the different planets and the stars.⁹⁴

2c. Steps γ and δ : Shaping the Circles of the Same and the Different

In the *De Anima*, Aristotle gives a brief and accurate summary of all four stages of the soul’s creation in the *Timaeus* and aptly explains the purpose of the mathematical procedures in stage β . In the quote below I have underlined and labeled his summary of what occurs in stages γ and δ .

“Τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ὁ Τίμαιος φυσιολογεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν κινεῖν τὸ σῶμα· τῷ γὰρ κινεῖσθαι αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ σῶμα κινεῖν διὰ τὸ συμπεπλέχθαι πρὸς αὐτό. συνεστηκυῖαν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων, καὶ μεμερισμένην κατὰ τοὺς ἀρμονικοὺς ἀριθμούς, ὅπως αἰσθησὶν τε σύμφυτον ἀρμονίας ἔχη καὶ τὸ πᾶν φέρεται συμφώνους φορὰς, [γ] τὴν εὐθυωρίαν εἰς κύκλον κατέκαμψεν· καὶ διελὼν ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς δύο κύκλους δισσαχῇ συνημμένους [δ] πάλιν τὸν ἕνα διεῖλιν εἰς ἑπτὰ κύκλους, ὥς οὕσας τὰς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ φορὰς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς κινήσεις.”

“In same way [as Democritus et al.], the *Timaeus*, too, physicalizes* the soul’s moving (*kinein*) the body. By moving itself the soul also moves the body, on account of its interweaving with the body. For [the soul] having been assembled from the elements and divided according to harmonic numbers both so that it should have innate perception of harmony and so that the universe should be borne along in harmonious (*sumphōnous*) motions, [γ] [the Demiurge] bent the

⁹⁴ There are 8 basic circular motions – the circle of the same, which carries the fixed stars, and the seven circles in the circle of the different for the seven planets: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn.

straight course into a circle. And, having divided the one into two circles conjoined at two points, [δ] once again he divided one [of them] into seven circles, because [in the *Timaeus*] the motions (*phoras*) of the heavens are the movements (*kinēseis*) of the soul (DA 406b26-407a2)."

To clarify, in stage γ the Demiurge stretches out the reunited, and mathematically ordered series, splits it down its length, and he turns both strips into rings or "Circles". He then interlocks the two rings so that they meet at two points. They run in contrary directions from one another. The Circle of the Same runs on the outside around the celestial equator, and the circle of the Different, nested within, moves contrariwise to the Same at a diagonal. This can be seen below in Diagram VI. Diagram VII shows how the circles correspond to standard astronomical divisions. Lastly, in stage δ, the circle of the different is divided into seven nested circles, one for each of the "planets", and they are given differing directions and rates of motion.

Diagram VI. Motions of the Circles of the Same and the Different

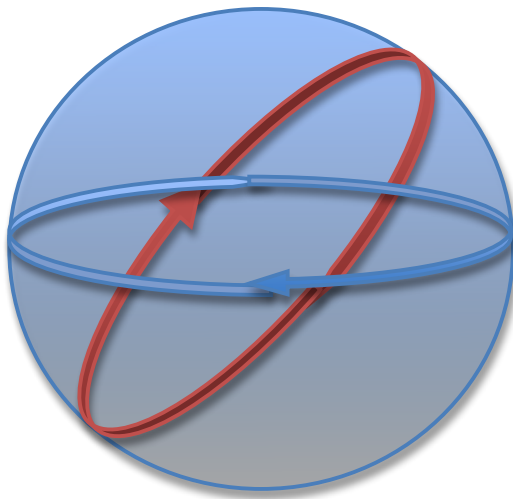
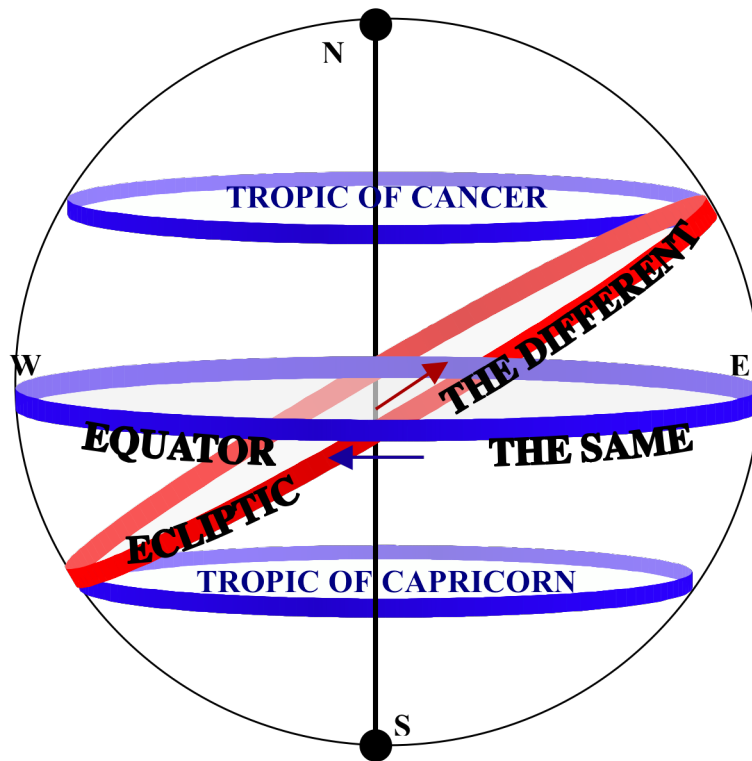


Diagram VII. The Circles of the Same and the Different seen Astronomically



3. Creation of the “Elements” and the World-body [31b4-34b9, 53c-56c]

Once the World-soul is completed, the Demiurge is ready to begin constructing a body for it so that the soul will have something to move, and so that the world that is coming to be will be sensible. Because it is sensible, it will be both visible and tangible. Visibility requires that it have fire, tangibility requires earth (31b). In order to exist in three dimensions, it must have two middle terms between an extreme, a condition discussed below in the ontology of the soul (32b-c). Although fire, earth, air, and water are typically referred to as the primary elements (53c), according to Plato they are formed from triangular planes, the basic elements out of which all bodies are constructed (53d). These basic triangles are aggregated into larger triangles, which then form the faces of the five Platonic solids: tetrahedron = fire, octahedron = air, icosahedron = water,

cube=earth and the heavens=dodecahedron (54d-55c). These shapes have uniform faces with all of their angle lengths and side lengths equal. By giving them their mathematical structure, the Demiurge made the four elements complete and beautiful, whereas they had only been traces of their future perfection and in disorderly motion:

“Indeed, it is a fact that before this took place the four kinds lacked all proportion and measure, and at the time the ordering of the universe was undertaken, fire, water, earth, and air initially possessed certain traces of what they are now. They were indeed in the condition one would expect thoroughly god-forsaken things to be in. So finding them in this natural condition, the first thing the god then did was to give them their distinctive shapes, using forms and numbers (*eidesi te kai arithmois* – εἶδεσί τε καὶ ἀριθμοῖς). Here is a proposition we shall always affirm above all else: The god fashioned these four kinds to be as perfect and excellent as possible, when they were no so before (53a7-b7).” [Trans. Zeyl].

The Demiurge creates these primary elements and then begins to craft other objects from them. He creates the body of the world from these elements, earth more towards the center, fire further out, and the heavens are shaped by the dodecahedron. The world is made as a perfectly smooth, well-rounded sphere, fully complete and regular within itself (32c-34b). No physical matter is left over after the cosmos is created; all substance is contained within one, single body. This body is entirely self-sufficient and needs no external input; it provides its own nourishment and recycles its own waste. The world soul is placed in the center of the completed body then stretched out to its outer extremities and wrapped around it from the outside (34b-c). At this point, the world soul is able to give life to the world body, which begins with the motions of the outer revolution of the same and the inner revolution of the different, along with the other divine bodies.

4. *Creation of Time with the Heavens* [37c6-40d5]

The world of forms and the intelligible model that the Demiurge uses belong to the world of eternal beings, which means that they are utterly unchanging and keep to themselves, a mark of their goodness. By contrast, the world that comes to be within the receptacle is characterized by change and motion, although it can be brought closer to the ideal through adopting an unchanging type of change, a constant motion that is self-referential. The most unchanging kind of motion is revolution in place, such as a top spinning. As a whole, it does not move, its outer extremities revolving around its central axis. This concept will dictate the basic motion of the world-body, with the entire created physical world rotating around its center, where the Earth is placed. The World-soul has two basic circles, or spheres, within it. The outer sphere, the Circle of the Same (discussed below) keeps the outer edge of the cosmos moving, rotating the entire cosmos along with it.

In order to make the created world a more perfect simulacrum of the world of Forms, it will have to be what Plato calls a “moving image of eternity.” Time, then, is an imitation of the timeless, created by the Demiurge to further perfect the universe. Acting as the so-called “guardians of time,” are heavenly bodies whose regular motion relative to one another will serve to visibly record the fact that the world is changing, but in a steady constant course. The Earth is placed at the center, and it is the oldest of the divine heavenly bodies. The seven so-called “wanderers”, or planets, follow it. The Moon is closest to the Earth, followed by Venus and Mercury, then the Sun, which he places as a lamp for the heavens so that they all are visibly observed to keep time. Finally there are the last three planets of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. These are moved by an internal

revolutionary motion, called the Circle of the Different, which is divided into seven sub-circles, one for each of the respective wanderers or planets.

To make the motion of the outer sphere of the same perceptible and to adorn it beautifully, the Demiurge creates the fixed stars. The stars, planets, and Earth, in addition to the World-body as a whole, are unique among the various bodies in creation in that they are indestructible, guaranteed continual existence by the Demiurge's will. They are primarily made of fire and serve as the bodies of the created gods. An individual, divine soul is assigned to each one of the stars, as indicated by the fact that they rotate in place, which will be discussed further in the individuation of gods below.

5. Creation of the Immortal Part of Man [41d-42e]

The Demiurge's work is approaching completion once the entire World-soul has been bonded to the world-body and the World-body has received its celestial bodies. At this point, he has created the lesser gods, chief among them the World-god, a combination of the World-soul and World-body, as well as the planets, with the astral gods below. He deputizes these gods to create the mortal parts of living creatures, starting with the bodies and mortal parts of the souls of men. If he were directly to create the bodies of mortals himself, they would be utterly immortal like the bodies of the gods, having come from his own hand. He must therefore deputize the lesser gods to imitate his own Demiurgical activity so that the world, like its model will be complete.

The model used for the created world is the Form of the Living Being, which contains within it--as genus to species--all the subtypes of living beings. That is to say, as the concept animal contains the concepts of bird and fish, so the form of the living being

included the forms of fish, bird, land beast, etc. The created world, to better imitate its model, must have all those varieties of living beings.

To initiate this process of filling the world with all mortal kinds, the Demiurge finished one final creation of his own. Even the mortal creatures formed by his first-born children, the created gods, will still have some share of the divine and the immortal, for the Demiurge repeats the process he used to create the World-soul, now making a second or third-grade quality of soul, which still is immortal. He places each one of these souls on its own home star, showing them the entire universe and all truths. For every immortal human soul, there is one corresponding star. These souls reside there, in their “chariot” stars, and are given the 'lay of the land,' as it were, by the Demiurge (cp. *Phdr.* 247bff).

Once he has created these immortal parts of the souls of mortal living things, bestowed them with knowledge, and given them guidance, the Demiurge seeds them into the various heavenly bodies. After exhorting the lesser gods to follow his example by completing the creation of humans and then giving them care and guidance the Demiurge then returns to his *natural state of rest* (42e5-6). The *Statesman* says something similar, with Cronos returning to his ‘vantage point’ once he releases the world, essentially implying that for an intelligible being, activity is not really the natural state, and thus suggesting the superiority of a *P*-reading (*Pol.* 272e3-5).

6. *Creation of the Mortal Parts of Man and the other Animals*

The created gods then set about the task of making houses for these souls. This process began with the head, the most circular part of the body, so that the circular orbits of the intellect created by the Demiurge can have a home. They created the other parts of the body so that there would be a means of conveyance for these heads, so that they

would have sense organs to inform them of their surroundings, mouths to take in food, hands to grasp things, etc.

In addition, the gods created the two other mortal parts of the soul, namely spirit and appetite, which are not necessary for the existence of an immortal part of the soul, but are necessary for the existence of a created, non-divine body. In the tripartite theory of the soul, these are entirely sub-Demiurgical creations, accretions to the immortal part of the soul while it is embodied.

In the process of creating human bodies, the lesser gods effectively make a series of trade-offs. The head is the most important part of the body, and thus should be well-protected. On the other hand, forming it from a thick substance would impair sense perception. Therefore, the gods choose to make the skull thinner-boned, less well-guarded than other parts of the body to the advantage of the cognition of the living thing. This is considered more important to the ultimate purpose of a human being, which is to remain true to the divine motion of the gods, retaining enough intellect to put the immortal part of the soul into the best order possible even though it is typically mauled during the birth process.

Lastly, as the bodies inhabited by these souls die, souls that have done poorly must descend to inferior forms. The first downgrade is from man to woman, and thence to the other types of living beings: birds, land animals, and ultimately fish and things that live in the sea, the lowest forms of life. This theory, of an ethical hierarchy of the animals in the cycle of reincarnation, follows as in the Myth of Er and the Myth of the *Phaedo*. Indeed, it seems that there are different places for each of these types of species. Once all these types of living animals have been created, creation is complete and the one created

cosmos is set in motion as a moving image of eternity and the best possible simulacrum of the intelligible from of a living being. Thus, creation is complete.

With this basic account of the creation myth in place, we will be able to proceed more easily through the technical issues that concern us in trying to better understand the World-soul and other divine, created beings in the *Timaeus*.

My account of the theory of panpsychism in *Timaeus*, that is the treatment of the World-soul, will have two remaining parts: In §III I will discuss how created gods are individuated in the *Timaeus*. It is more typical of Timaeus to say that one or more of the created gods performs this or that activity, rather than World-soul or any other divine soul. That is because the World-soul is not an isolated entity, but is in fact a part of the god who is the cosmos as a whole, so the actions of the World-god just are the World-soul's actions. However, the World-soul also is the soul responsible for moving the bodies of the planets, and so it is arguably the soul of each, even though each planet is a separate god. Since these gods have their own duties in the cosmos, to know if these works are also attributable to the World-soul requires that we must know if the planets can be different gods (individuated by their separate bodies) even though they each have the same soul, viz. the World-soul. I will argue that this is so, and that it is made more plausible by the fact that the circle of the different is cut into "strips", each a kind of sub-soul for its respective planet. On the other hand, there are other gods in the cosmos who are associated with the fixed stars and who have their own unique souls, or so I will argue. Because these gods perform different functions than either the World-god or the Planet-gods, it is necessary that their relationship to the World-soul be understood as well, lest we attribute to it roles which are not its own.

Once we are in a position to discern which activities of which created gods are accomplished by means of the World-soul (and which by other divine, celestial souls), I will identify and discuss in §IV what it is that the World-soul is responsible for doing according to the *Timaeus*. This will involve analysis of several parts of the dialogue, including the creation of the body of the cosmos and its binding together with soul at 34a-c, the construction of the World-soul proper following the mixing of soul (36c-37c), the motions and functions of the planets and the earth at 37d-40c, and the creation and administration of mortal bodies and the mortal parts of their souls (41b-47e, 69c^{ff}.)

§III. One ΠΨ but many gods: how the ΠΨ is related to the *Timaeus*' various lesser gods

There is a significant shift in the treatment of celestial gods from the *Phaedrus* to the *Timaeus* that dovetails the maturation of Plato's conception of generation and his introduction of the Demiurge (an unmoving mover, in comparison to the *Phaedrus*' self-moved movers). In the *Phaedrus*, the celestial gods were identified *only as souls*, and not the bodies of any related *meteora* that they might move or inhabit (*Phdr.* 246c-d). In the *Phaedrus* there is no indication that there can be such a thing as an eternal body, for bodies are created, and, according to its immortality argument, only the ungenerated can be indestructible (245e6-246a2). The soul, on the other hand, is argued in the *Phaedrus* to be ungenerated; it must be, being eternally moving and indestructible. Since the gods are first and foremost immortal entities, it makes sense that only their immortal "part" be counted as constitutive of their identity.

In the *Timaeus*, however, the entire cosmos, body and soul, is referred to as a god (36e, 92c). The individual planets and the Earth are also gods. The World-soul, on its own, is not called a god, but "because the soul shares in reason and harmony, it came to

be the best of the things begotten by he who is the best of the intelligible and eternally existing things (36e6-37a2).” Certainly the cosmos as a whole, “dominated” by the World-soul, is a god. With the exception of their father and maker, the Demiurge, all the gods in the *Timaeus* seem to be perfect, created souls in divinely crafted, immortal bodies. Unlike the mortal parts of the soul or the bodies that (some of) these gods fashion for mortals, the gods’ own bodies are imperishable by virtue of the power and will of their uncreated creator, the Demiurge (*Tim.* 41b; also *Pol.* 270a, 273e). The fact that the *Timaeus* can countenance both a conception of soul as “generated” and a reason for believing that there could be imperishable bodies helps to account for these changes from the *Phaedrus*, where soul’s generation would spoil its immortality and where the gods are only the souls moving the planets and not the planets themselves.

Gods are now individuated by body and by soul. So it may even be possible, that the activities of several different gods (with different bodies) all count as the activity of the same one soul, the World-soul. Some of these seem to *have* the ΠΨ as their soul, while others do not. Clearing this up is necessary to figure out what the ΠΨ does, since *some* of the activities of the created gods are ascribed to the seven planets and/or the Earth, while others are ascribed only to the World-soul/World-God, and others still to them all.

I will distinguish the following sets of bodies, each referred to as god(s) in the dialogue, and take a position as to which have the ΠΨ as their Ψ and which have their own Ψs, individual and proper to themselves alone:

- The entire Cosmos - τὸ πᾶν, κόσμος, (πᾶς) οὐρανός
- The “Heavens” (meaning the “sphere” of fixed stars) – οὐρανός⁹⁵

⁹⁵ That *heavens* (ouranos – οὐρανός) can mean just the sky as the “vault” of the heavens or it can be shorthand for the cosmos as a whole as in Aristotle’s ΠΕΡΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ – *De Caelo* which is not

- The Earth
- The Seven planets (Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn)
- The individual fixed stars

I take the position that all but the last seem to have the $\Pi\Psi$ as their soul. It is obvious that the motion of the first is the motion of the World-soul, and that the motions and activities of the universe as a whole are the acts of the World-god, whose body just is the cosmos. The motion of the entirety of the cosmos around its center is the motion of the Circle of the Same. It is also wholly plain that the motion that compels the firmament or tapestry of fixed stars around the equator is the motion of the circle of the same (40a-b). Therefore, the sphere of fixed stars, which is the spherical limit of the cosmos or World-body, is moved by the World-soul and has the World-soul as its soul. In fact the text makes it plainly clear that the Ψ of the Π -god (the $\Pi\Psi$) is stretched to, envelops, and moves its body (the World-body or cosmos) at its spherical limits. “In the middle of [the World-body] he placed soul, and he stretched it through the whole and furthermore covered the body with it from the outside. And he set the one, single, solitary, circular heaven to turn in a circle (34b3-6)....” (See also 36e1-5).

The individual, fixed stars must have its own soul, as proven by the fact that it not only is pushed along by the Circle of the Same but because it also rotates on its own axis. Since each is a god, it can be said that these gods are moved about with one of the lateral motions. If anything, there can only be a question as to whether other bodies within the heavens are also animated by the $\Pi\Psi$ in the same manner as the cosmos as a whole. But this can scarcely be doubted, as the line that says, “he stretched it [the World-soul] through the whole” states that, “...the eternally existing god made the god which was to

restricted to the “heavens” in the narrow sense, but the entire cosmic from outermost sphere to the center of the Earth.

be a smooth, entirely uniform, equal-from-the-middle, whole, and complete body out of complete bodies." In other words, the completed bodies 'in' the whole are actually constitutive of the 'whole' (*Tim.* 32d-33a).

Unlike the stars, we are never told that the planets rotate on their own axes. And this may be suggested to Plato by the fact that they do not twinkle, whereas the fixed stars do (cf. Aristotle *APo.* I.13). Furthermore, in their motion they are described as each being moved around by one of the seven Circles of the different, as well as the overall of the Circle of the Same, but they are not described as being pushed from without, i.e. by one of the six lateral forms of motions that is not self-motion around a central point. This suggests that all their motion is the motion of the World-soul and thus their souls are none other than the World-soul. If that is true, then they have the same soul as the World-god. However, each is called a god individually. Can it be possible that the seven planets and the stationary earth are each gods and the World-body plus World-soul is itself the greatest and first created god, even though they all have a common soul? It is possible if the condition of individuation for gods is the combination of body and soul where a change in either of the two constitutes a new god.

The planets are described as being placed in orbits prepared for 'carrying' them (38e), but heavenly bodies we always expected to be moved in some sense by souls. On the other hand, being placed in these orbits seems to coincide simultaneously with the planets 'being bound by bonds of soul' such that these bodies are given life and then given knowledge of their 'assigned tasks'. In that case, we can consider the seven planets, the Earth, and the world as a whole each a different god, but consider their actions all the actions of the World-soul.

I am going to assume henceforth that this is the case, and thus the activities of the created gods assigned to them by the Demiurge will be treated as the tasks and activities of the World-soul as embodied and carried out by those nine gods: Earth, the Whole, and the seven planets. We can still distinguish these from the astral gods, i.e. the gods of the individual fixed stars, since they have different souls, and their purpose seems to be more limited to the care of the individual mortals and the immortal parts of their souls which are assigned individually to respective home stars.

At any rate, in his discussions of the work done by the created gods, Timaeus casually slips between what ‘god’ or ‘the god’ did (with the subject in the singular), and what ‘the gods’ do. As there are no particular markers to specify which of the Demiurge’s children is the ‘god’ in question when the divine subject is in the singular, it is safe to guess that it is *the* created god, *primus inter pares*, that is being referred to, viz. the World-god. In that case, for all the general functions of maintaining the cosmos, Timaeus is comfortable enough with treating the World-god and all the super-celestial created gods as interchangeable. There are cases where very specific functions are assigned (by name) to particular lesser gods. The sun (39b) and the earth (49b) are the most notable in this regard, although all the planets “cooperate” in producing time.

§IV. The functions of the $\Pi\Psi$ in the cosmos

We can now discuss the functions of the World-soul in the cosmos according to Timaeus' account. We'll divide these up into four types, which by no means are mutually exclusive; indeed they often imply or are directly related to one another. But it will be useful to separate them, if only for clarity's sake. The first type will be metaphysical improvements, ways in which the World-soul permits the world of coming to be, the

sensible world, to be more like the intelligible world, and in particular the model of the Intelligible Living Being. Second, we'll look at the function of the created gods in making human beings. Though the immortal parts of the souls of human beings are created by the Demiurge, their mortal bodies and the mortal parts of their souls are the responsibility of the created gods. The third set of functions that we'll look at is the role of the World-soul in managing and maintaining the orderliness and goodness of the created world. Finally, we'll look at the role and function of the World-soul, vis-à-vis the motions of the heavens, in inspiring mortal beings to become more godlike by contemplating and emulating their intellectual motions.

1. *Functions to make the cosmos like its model – i.e. metaphysical improvements*

The first and most obvious way in which the World-soul metaphysically improves the created world is by making it more like its model. That is to say, in as much as the World-soul gives the world life, and makes the entire cosmos a living being, it brings the entire cosmos closer to its model. But we might well ask, why is the model for the created world specifically chosen to be the noeton zoon, the intelligible living animal or living thing?

There are three related reasons for supposing that the noeton zoon is the best possible model for a world of change. The first reason, which will be discussed in greater length in the final chapter on the Demiurge, is this: according to testimony from Aristotle, it may be that Plato regards the form of the living thing as the Idea of the Good with three dimensions added to it. That is to say that if we take the Idea of the Good and schematize it, that is, put it in an applicable form suitable for space, it would actually be the Form of the Living Thing. Though I won't go into that now, the next two related reasons give

some suggestions as to why the living thing is the best realization of the good within three dimensions. The Form of the living thing presents an ideal model, for the created world both because it represents something that is alive, which is to say something self-moving, and because by having soul it can possess *nous*. And, as Timaeus tells us early on, for anything among those things that come to be, none lacking in *nous* is ever as good one that possesses *nous* or intellect.

That may seem to be a very bold claim, but consider two points. First, it is by virtue of their intellectual motion, movement that is most akin to *nous*, (the result of their having *nous*), that the heavens, the best part of the created world, move in their constant, circular, rational way. Second, because they do this, and because the world is animated and alive and capable of moving itself, the heavens move in perpetuity in a rational way. That is, though the heavens have motion, they have an unchanging, constant, and self-centered rotational kind of motion. This is what permits the created world to be a moving image of eternity. Whereas the forms are truly eternal or sempiternal not in-time at all, by virtue of being in the receptacle, the created world will at best have time, assuming that it is put in sufficient order. And so constant cycles of time are as close as the entire created world can be brought to that form of real being that the forms possess. Hence, the World-soul:

1. Makes the world alive and thus able to self-move.
2. Allows the world to have *nous*, which makes possible its motion being rational.
3. Thus the World-soul makes the world capable of being a moving image of eternity.

Furthermore, the basic value of *nous* is an almost foundational or axiomatic claim here. For one thing, *nous* is that best possession for anything that comes to be because it

is the part of the soul that comes closest to reaching the Forms. *Nous* is that which in souls permits them to grasp or make contact with the Forms and allows its possessor to be most like them.

At the end of Timaeus' account (91ff), when we learn about the cycles of reincarnation that souls may go through, wicked souls progress through a series of increasingly unintelligent life forms. At each stage, by becoming a dumber sort of beast, located in a part of the created world that has a more obstructed view of the heavens (e.g. underwater) the soul is placed in worse and worse positions. Its punishment or the cause of its punishment is that its intellect is increasingly, steadily warped and diminished. There is a premium put on the value of being able to have *nous* in the world both because it is the best thing which any particular living thing within the whole can possess and act to perfect and also because it is that part of living things, of things with souls, that brings them closest of all to the intelligible forms.

To summarize, the World-soul metaphysically improves the created world by making it alive and intelligent. Intelligent life is the single and best way to make things that have to move and change become more like the forms. Life can allow motion to be self-generated and thus constant, and souls also can possess *nous*. *Nous* brings its possessor closer to the Forms by cognition of them, and it allows their motion to be orderly, self-possessed, and constant rather than random.

2. *World-soul creates the bodies of mortals*

The second major task that the World-soul or the created gods undertake is to fulfill the order of their father and creator, the Demiurge, and create mortal beings by imitating the creative acts that he used to create them. They take the immortal souls of

mortal beings to whom the Demiurge has presented the Forms and then sewn into various planets and the earth. Imitating the world as a whole, they place these souls in bodies resembling the heavens as a whole. That is to say that the first part of the body created is the head, which is spherical so as to better preserve the orbits of human *nous*. However, lest they simply roll about on the ground unable to overpass difficult terrain, the gods attach these heads onto vehicles capable of all six lateral motions in addition to the spherical motion of the reason within it.

So as to prevent the mind from being accessibly corrupted by the body, they place it further away from the internal organs at the end of a long stem, that is the neck. They devise vision where the eyes emit light that is alike to sunlight such that, when like knows like, they meet in the air, sight comes about. The benefit of this is that the human is able to see the stars, the planets, and by perceiving time, they come to acquire number, the ability to calculate, and the reasoning skills that come about with this. And this, Timaeus argues, is the ultimate value and goal of sight, namely to help mortal being reach a higher level of intellect. Similarly in the case of hearing, which the gods devise, by means of speech the human being can come to acquire *logoi*, conversations/accounts, but they can also benefit from music which can further introduce them to harmonies which improve the balance of their souls and make them move more harmoniously, again like the heavenly bodies.

Later in the *Timaeus*, once the strain cause or necessity has been introduced, we begin to see tradeoffs between teleological reasoning and physical, hypothetical necessities. For instance, it would be preferable for the head to be better protected than it is by the relatively thin bone structure of the skull and the relatively thin amount of flesh

or padding that it has. However, were the head to be constructed out of coarser stuff, say the rhinoceros' hide, this would impair sense-perception, and ultimately created gods decide that it is preferable for there to be greater risk and concurrently shorter life for the mortal being with greater potential for moral improve than to have a long life that is more lacking in intelligence and psychic quality.

In order for the soul to be nourished and sustain the body that carries it, the various internal organs of the body will also be necessary and along with these come the mortal qualities of the soul. These are not like *nous*, which is created by the Demiurge, and are thus ultimately unbreakable. They come to be and perish along with the living body and appetite and spirit, the tripartite theory of the soul which are now identified as mortal parts, can potentially have a corrupting influence on reason unless the mortal who possesses all three parts of the soul does his utmost to place them in the proper balance, à la the account of Justice in the *Republic*. Thus, the created gods create human beings with a teleological structure in mind, namely a physical structure that best permits them to achieve psychic goodness, which is the perfection of their own intellect or *nous*. They must use physical parts and the elements, whose basic structure was given established by the Demiurge as the so-called elemental bodies, but which in various respects are recalcitrant and require tradeoffs.

To conclude this part, there are three things with regard to anthropogenesis that the World-soul takes responsibility for: 1. The creation of the human body with the human senses with a purpose of making its soul and intellect as good and as much like itself as possible, just like the Demiurge created the World-soul and the cosmos to be as good and as much like himself as possible. 2. The creation of the mortal parts of the soul

which allow the body to protect itself and seek the nourishment that it needs, vis-à-vis appetite, and to continue the mortal race with sexual desires. 3. The World-soul/created gods are responsible for initially placing the mortal souls into the first created bodies from whence the Demiurge had seeded them.

Note, incidentally, that this compares favorably, or can be integrated with, the account of particular bodies receiving their souls from the World-soul of the world-body in the microcosm-macrocosm argument of Phl. 28d-31a which we discussed in the previous chapter.

3. *World-soul manages and maintains the cosmos*

The third function of the World-soul or created gods is the management of the cosmos, overseeing its proper and ordered continuation. Part of this procedure has already been discussed in regard to the metaphysical discussion played by the World-soul, for by being the guardians of time, the planets create such periods as the night and day with the sun and the earth, the month with the moon and the earth, the year with the fixed stars, etc. These create time, which makes the cosmos a moving image of eternity, but we can presume of course that night and day also give rise to various climatic features of the world as well. If one part of the world were to have unending day and another part to have unending night, one would of course become overheated, the other over-cooled, and neither capable of sustaining life, that is the variety of particular living forms, all of which are contained in the one, overall living being of the world-god. Additionally if we take into account information from the *Philebus*, vis-à-vis the World-soul/*nous* ordering the seasons and the account of the sun being responsible for life-giving in *Republic* book VI, then we can easily interpolate that here and once again regard those cosmic, those

celestial bodies moved by the world-soul as playing that important life-sustaining function.

The second respect in which the world-soul helps to maintain cosmic order is specifically the nourishment and attention for living beings and in particular human beings. When the human being is initially created, it is said that the created gods borrow from the entire amount of the respected four elements portions out of which they'll fashion the human body, but which they fully intend to return back to the whole. That is to say that when an individual mortal dies, it is not only his soul, as it were, that stays in circulation through transmigration into another body, but the parts of his body are reabsorbed into the earth and reenter the physical cycle of the elements in which fire, air, and water inter-transform.⁹⁶

Before, we discussed how the World-soul created the human being/gods, but the world-soul also creates the human female after human male and then the various other types of living beings. To some extent this is in fulfillment of its metaphysical goal since the form of the living being contains in it, as genus to species, the various specific life forms. That is, under animal in general we have bird, fish, land creature or beast, man, and then under fish we have cod, shark, etc. So in the single living being, which is the cosmos, there will be contained, now not logically, but physically, all the variety of living creatures. The created gods make these too. This can be seen not merely from the metaphysical angle, but also from an ethical angle. The purpose of these various other animals is that there be a suitable place for worse and worse souls, souls that have corrupted and deformed excessively their truly immortal part, their intellect, and likewise,

⁹⁶ Earth being excepted because of incommensurate triangles.

they find a place suitable for such creatures in the various strata of the earth, from the air to ground and to underwater and presumably underground. So by having these other types of living beings, which they create, the created gods help maintain the moral order that the Demiurge intends, a hierarchy of better and worse souls, located in better or worse elementally disposed locations, such that intellects are in their appropriate place for reward or punishment.

Lastly, the created gods take responsibility for the nourishment of these living creatures. They create plants, which have only mortal souls with no immortal part, contra Empedocles, and these are created for the sake of consumption by animals and men, and those animals as well for consumption by human beings. Furthermore, in discussing the guardians of time, the Earth is called the oldest of those gods (i.e. Earth and the seven planets) and she is said to be responsible for the nourishing and keeping of the living things upon her.

So to recapitulate, in the management of the cosmos the functions are these: First, by becoming the instruments and guardians of time, the sun, the moon, the planets and stars also maintain various cosmic and meteorological cycles such as day and night, and we can as well presume the seasons. Bringing in evidence from outside the *Timaeus*, we know that Plato regards some of these celestial bodies, particular the sun as uniquely crucial to maintaining life on earth, as even in his time people were completely well aware. The second function was to maintain a certain balance of moral order between souls of different, varying qualities, in this case by creating a hierarchy of living beings. This not only makes the living world more like its model, but it also creates a just scale of order and it suitably rewards or punishes various souls by placing them in better or worse

places in their subsequent lives. The third respect in which we can say that the World-soul or created gods maintains well the created cosmos is by creating plant life, sustaining life both through the recycling of the elemental bodies from which they are composed and yielding those components up again through plant life and food such that new beings can be created.

4. Created Gods provide a good example for mortal souls to emulate

Already mentioned at several points in my account of the heavens and the purpose of the senses which created gods bestow upon human beings is the pedagogical or protreptic value that the gods play for all the other lesser created beings. By serving as unerring, unswerving movers which display perfect, rational motion, they better inspire those creatures possessing inferior types of intellect and they serve as the proper subject to be studied in the development of mathematics and the other sciences that will ultimately lead human beings to philosophy. Thus, Plato's doctrine of *homoiosis theō*, becoming like god, not only requires that mortals be constituted so as to be able to properly appreciate perceivable gods, but also that these gods behave in such a way that said mortals ought to emulate them and in emulating them become closer to them.

Chapter 3 - The Gods and World-soul in the Theology of *Laws X*

In this chapter, the last of three on the World-soul, our approach will be to learn about the account of the World-soul in the *Laws* by proceeding slowly through the argument for the existence of the Gods in book X. *Laws X* is more explicit about the purposes of such theological arguments and the sort of opponents Plato has in mind than other discussions of his theology. Therefore, going through the argument will also give us a clearer sense of the full range of services that his immanent World-soul deity is meant to perform for his philosophy. At the end of the chapter, we will briefly consider ways in which another, higher conception of god, i.e. the Demiurge, is still present to the dialogue, even though the theological discussion of *Laws X* overwhelmingly focuses on the World-soul, in contrast to the *Timaeus* or the myth of the *Statesman*.

§I. Approaching the Theology in Book X of the *Laws*

The *Laws* attempts to make Plato's political and legal claims without heavy reference to or reliance upon his metaphysics and epistemology, at least as we understand them from the Middle and Late dialogues. Given Plato's general tendency to link his theoretical and practical philosophy this is somewhat surprising. Plato's other mature works in political philosophy, the *Republic* and *Statesman* are markedly different from the *Laws* in this regard, for the *Republic* relies upon the epistemology and metaphysics of the divided line and the cave, and the *Statesman* uses the dialectical method of division and a semi-mythical, semi-cosmological account of intelligent and divine stewardship to develop the concept of kingship.

For this reason and also because of the *Laws* choice of a second-best city over the *Republic*'s Kallipolis, some scholars have concluded that the absence of theory of Forms

or the tripartite theory of the soul from the *Laws* actually constitutes a rejection thereof and a radical moderation of Plato's earlier thought. Bobonich's *Plato's Utopia Recast* represents the latest and best work in this vein. Let us call such readings of the *Laws* "**revisionist**," not in the sense that they revise or reject traditional scholarly thinking, but in the sense that they take the *Laws* to be substantially revising Plato's philosophy and breaking with a number of important, even characteristic elements of his earlier work.

The most theoretical philosophy that we find in the *Laws* is the theology and cosmology in *Laws* X, especially in the theory of psychic movement put forward in the argument for the existence of gods. On a revisionist reading, the theology and cosmology contained therein represent Plato's final and most complete word on those subjects. A close cousin to these interpretations of *Laws* X tries to preserve more continuity between the *Laws* and Plato's other late dialogues by interpreting the theology and cosmology of the *Timaeus* in light of the *Laws*. John Dillon, for instance, takes the theology of the *Laws* to be Plato's real, late views; thus he rejects what he calls "literalism" in his reading of the *Timaeus*. He does away with temporal creation (including the creation of soul) and understands the Demiurge only to be an allegorical way of expressing the rationality of the World-soul ([2003a] 24-5, 53-5, 62-4).

Following Skemp, I will offer a different reading of the *Laws*' cosmology in which the *Laws* is not seen as rejecting earlier views but as omitting them from discussion ([1942] 96-7, 108). Instead, I will suggest that *Laws* X presents a theory of the soul very much akin to that which is found in the *Philebus*.

As a *prima facie* justification of this approach, I call the reader's attention to sections of *Laws* XII concerning the goal of the statesman, i.e. virtue, (963a1-964b1) and

the education that the guardians of the law require to properly understand virtue and to administer its inculcation in the populace of Magnesia (965b1-969d3). The first presents the dialectical method(s) of division and collection which are central to the late dialogues (*Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus* especially); the second presents the epistemological side of the Theory of Forms – i.e. the many ϕ s are recognized as ϕ by reference to one single Φ form. Hence, while they do not give the metaphysics of the Theory of Forms, they do present its epistemology explicitly. Furthermore, the dialogue remains unfinished, but ends just as the interlocutors are about to turn to a thorough investigation of the education of the guardians of the laws. In the *Republic*, it was exactly in that context, the education of the philosopher rulers, when the Theory of Forms, the Divided Line analogy, and the Allegory of the Cave were brought up (*R.* VI-VII).

In the following § the argument for the existence of gods in *Laws* X and the discussion leading up to it will be analyzed in order that the cosmological role of divine soul therein can be identified and understood. To better determine what the Athenian is saying about those divine souls who are the gods, it will be instructive to see what he is looking to get from the argument and the theology it presents. The resultant portrayal of a supreme soul that is the caretaker of the cosmos and especially the psyches within it, and which is presented as being responsible for all kinds of order throughout, will be compared to the World-soul as described in the *Philebus* 27d-31e. We will see that the two views have much in common and give soul a very important and powerful role in the maintenance of order in the cosmos, including the ordering and sustenance of bodies.

§II. Context and Aims of the Arguments

At *Laws* VII 820e8ff the Athenian makes the argument that astronomy is a proper part of the city's education. This is so because, contrary to the popular opinion that the study of the things in the heavens leads to impiety, it actually teaches its students how to avoid defend the gods against a common slander.⁹⁷ To wit, the seemingly erratic motion of the "wanderers", that is the planets, can be accounted for as regular circular motion by means of mathematical astronomy. Understood in terms of the conclusions of the first argument in *Laws* X, this means that the gods of heavens including the Sun and the Moon are proven to move in the manner of intellect, thus showing that they are good souls, not irrational, evil ones. Nothing could be more pious than to show that the gods (and such important ones as the seven planets) are good, rather than bad (*L.* 821b5-c5, 822a4-c6).

In as much as the Athenian has only to prove to the atheist that there are gods, it will suffice for him to prove that there are rational souls moving the heavenly bodies. However, in as much as the Athenian is trying to show the priority of soul to body and of those things pertaining to soul such as craft, reason, and law over those which pertain to bodies such as nature, chance, and physical attributes, he must make stronger claims about the nature of psychic motion – claims which at times push the view nearly as far as panempsychism, where "panempsychism" means not merely that there is a soul for the world (τὸ πᾶν) or "panpsychism," nor where each thing has its own individual soul, "animism", but where all things in the world must be in some sense pervaded by (the operations of) soul.

The opponent is a young man who holds either that:

⁹⁷ "Meteorology" was banned in Athens. Cf. Aristophanes (*N*), where the students of the Thinkatorium have their heads stuck in the ground and Socrates rides a basket in the air, in order to study things under the earth and in the heavens, respectively. This charge is also discussed in the *Apo.* 19b4-d3, 23d6, and 26d1-e3, where Socrates denies any pursuit of natural philosophy.

- (1) The gods do not exist; OR
- (2) They take no thought of the human race; OR
- (3) They can be easily influenced by sacrifices and supplications.

However, at *L.* 887b7-8 Clinias enumerates the theological demonstranda that would be the best preamble to their legal code as:

- (i) The gods exist
- (ii) They are good.
- (iii) They respect justice more than men do.

Point (ii) is a key theological claim defended in *Republic* II and throughout the *Timaeus*. Indeed a stronger form of it is maintained therein: that the gods are good and that *they are never the causes of anything evil* (*R.* 379b1-380c10; *Tim.* 29a5-6, 30a2-3, 30a6-7, 42d3-4, 42e3-4. It is also to be found at *Tht.* 176a6-8,b8-c3). The three main arguments of *Laws* X are set up so as to refute (1), (2), and (3), but we can see the first argument as establishing (i) and (ii) and see the last two arguments as using (ii) to show (iii) as expressed in the denial of (2) and (3). That is to say that it is shown that the gods care for men specifically by showing that they are just, i.e. they see to it that the good are rewarded and the wicked are punished. Similarly, in the third argument of *Laws* X it is because the gods are just that they value virtue above mere tokens and so hold people responsible for their general character and not just certain ritual observances, i.e. no fair judge could be bribed (905d3-907b4).

Clinias thinks that it is easy to explain the existence of the gods (885e7-8). As evidence he cites: (1) celestial bodies (sun, stars, the cosmos in general), the earth, and the orderly procession of seasons with articulation [of time] into months and year; (2) that

all Greeks and foreigners unanimously acknowledge the existence of gods (886a2-5). The Athenian does not dismiss these arguments out of hand. He admits that it is infuriating that these youths should have failed to learn from the example of people everywhere and from their cultural heritage, i.e. the myths they learned in their youth (887c7-887e9).

This problem would be manageable if it were just a manifestation of a natural kind of character weakness in the young. Unfortunately, it is not merely temptation for pleasure that leads such youths to atheism (886a6-b2). Rather it is works of “theology” (*peri theōn* - περὶ θεῶν) that are “ignorance passing for wisdom” (886b7-8), which have had a bad influence on them and lead them to outright atheism (886b10ff). In response to Clinias’ claims, the acolytes of these cunning men will say that the heavenly bodies are just earth and stones and are incapable of caring for human affairs. (886d4-e2). Following their teachers these youths are led to ‘live according to nature’ (*pros ton kata phusin orthon bion* - πρὸς τὸν κατὰ φύσιν ὀρθὸν βίον), which really means mastering others, rather than being a slave to law and legal convention (890a7-9).

Already we can begin to see what the strategy will be: to show that these bodies are such as to be able to care for men, i.e. alive and thinking, and not dead rocks. There are also old cosmogonies/theogonies that set a bad moral example for the young, and they should not be recommended, but they are hard to dismiss because of their antiquity and they are not as insidious (886c2-d2). So it is not poets such as Hesiod and the like whose views are under scrutiny in the first argument, but rather those who write about nature (*peri phuseōs* - περὶ φύσεως) such as Democritus - the likely representative of the view that body is prior to soul - or Anaxagoras, the clear target of the reference ‘call [the sun and the stars] earth and stones (L. 886d6-8; cf. *Apo.* 26d1-e3).’

The discussion of the opponents' basic viewpoint (and the contrary principles that the Athenian will argue for) begins with a threefold division of that which is responsible for things coming in to being. Things come to be either: by nature (*phusei* φύσει), by chance (*tuchēi* τύχῃ), or by means of artifice (*dia technēn* -διὰ τέχνην) (888e4-6). This division is held among many to be the wisest/most learned (*sophōtaton* - σοφώτατον) of all doctrines (888e1-2).⁹⁸ When asked by Clinias if he endorses this division, the Athenian says that it is likely that wise men speak truly (888e8-889a2). This is not mere irony, for: (1) we do not find any later renunciation of this scheme; (2) Plato has used it before in arguments in the earlier dialogues (e.g. in the *Sophist* at 265c1-e2); (3) similar thoughts have already been advanced by the Athenian earlier in the *Laws* at 709b7-c4. There, the Athenian claims that the dominant factor in life is God, followed second by chance (*tuchē* - τύχῃ) and opportunity (*kairos* – καιρός), and then supplemented by craft (*technē* - τέχνη) in third place.⁹⁹ It will turn out that the gods act rationally, embodying reason (*nous* - νοῦς) or craft (*technē* - τέχνη), but we need not wait until the end of the argument; at 889c5-6, intellect (*nous* – νοῦς), god(s), and craft (*technē* - τέχνη) are treated in tandem as that which the naturalists reject as the cause of the production of the heavenly bodies and living things: “Not through intellect (*dia noun* - διὰ νοῦν), they say, nor by some god (*dia tina theon* - δία τινα θεόν), nor by craft (*dia technēn* - διὰ τέχνην), but by that which we call nature (*phusei* – φύσει) and chance (*tuchēi* – τύχῃ).”

The goal of this argument is to Show: **Soul** (*psuchē* - ψυχή) & **Art** (*technē* - τέχνη) are prior to **Body** (*sōma* - σῶμα) & **Nature** (*phusis* - φύσις)/**Chance** (*tuchē* - τύχῃ). Clinias recognizes the goals of the argument for the sake of law and the gods to

⁹⁸ “τὸν παρὰ πολλοῖς δοξαζόμενον εἶναι σοφώτατον ἀπάντων λόγων.”

⁹⁹ Plato elsewhere simplifies this by subdividing craft into human and divine types, e.g. *Soph.* 265b6ff, rather than making them two different kinds of causal factor.

especially be defending law and art, the products of reason, as part of nature or by some other agency no less powerful than nature (890d5-8). In fact, the Athenian will go farther and show that they are prior to nature because the substance that they are associated with, soul, is prior to the substances that nature is associated with, i.e. bodies (892a8-b8). This is not the same as showing that the gods exist, and it may or may not be a necessary step on the way to proving that claim.

The atheist explicitly gives temporal-ontological priority to bodies over souls. At 891b8-c3 the atheist endorses the view that the four elements are the primaries (*prōta* - πρῶτα) among all that is, and these he calls nature “φύσιν” –*phusin*. Souls are posterior to these primaries. “Soul, on the other hand, is [sc. generated] *from* out of these things later (891c3-4).” The Athenian announces that he will reverse this picture by correcting mistaken notions about the soul. By showing that the soul is the oldest of things that come to be - that it is literally the “first cause (*prōton aition* - πρῶτον...αἷτιον) of the creation (*geneseōs* - γενέσεως) and destruction (*phthoras* - φθορᾶς) of all [these] things” (891e5-6)- he will reverse the errors that led to their mistakes about “the real essence/being of the gods” (*peri theōn tēs ontōs ousias* - περὶ θεῶν τῆς ὄντως οὐσίας) (891e8-9)¹⁰⁰.¹⁰¹

Soul’s nature and power is not well understood, but it will be shown that it comes to be among the first things, before any bodies, and that it, more than anything else, is responsible for the change (*metabolēs*- μεταβολῆς) and rearrangement (*metakosmēseōs* - μετακοσμήσεως) of bodies (892a2-b1). This in turn will prove that those things associated with soul, mental states and the products of thinking and planning, will be

¹⁰⁰ Alternatively: “whence they erred concerning the gods of true reality”.

¹⁰¹ We might think of this strategy as a reversal of Marx’s righting of an upside-down Hegel, by replacing Speculative (Dialectical) Idealism with Dialectical Materialism.

prior to physical attributes such as the contraries (e.g. hard and soft) (892b3-6). Moreover, craft and intellect will be held to be responsible for the existence of nature, which they rule over (892b6-8). For the sake of convenience, let us call the view that the Athenian is trying to establish “psycharchy”, and let us call the view that he is trying to overturn “somatarchy” or (“physiarchy”). Soul will therefore turn out to be the elder substance compared to body; therefore, none of the so-called elements will be among the very first things (892c2-7).

We have surveyed the following preliminary points:

1. The religious stakes of understanding celestial motion, when the planets are gods;
2. The impieties of atheism, divine indifferentism, and divine indulgence that threaten the laws and morals of the state;
3. The impetus for the worst of these impieties originating in more recent natural philosophy,
4. The nature of this natural philosophy as a corporealistic, anti-teleological approach to natural order;
5. The strategy for overturning this natural philosophy by reversing the direction of priority/authority/(in)dependence that it posits as holding between bodies/the corporeal and souls/the psychological. Now we turn to the argument itself.

§III. The Argument for the Existence of the Gods

The argument has a few main parts. The first (1) is to show the priority of the soul and what is psychological over the body and what is corporeal. Next, (2) soul will be shown to be the mover of the heavenly bodies. Finally, (3) this will be taken to show the existence of gods as rational and benevolent souls. We consider these parts in turn.

1. *Part One: the Psychological is prior to the Corporeal* [893b6-896d4]

The basic structure of the argument to establish the priority of soul is remarkably clear, at once carefully broken down. Laid out schematically it takes the following form:

1. There are two kinds of motion: (I) self-moved and (II) externally moved [motion].
2. Motion I is prior and superior to motion II. (Drawing on 1).¹⁰²
3. If Motion I arises in a body, whatever its composition, then it is alive.
4. The presence of a soul in a body is what causes a body to be alive. (Roughly 3)
5. Therefore, soul is this self-moving motion. (2,4)
6. Bodies are thus moved by souls. (3,4,5)
7. Souls are prior and superior to bodies (2, 5, 6 analogically).
8. What pertains/belongs to soul is prior/superior to what is of body (7 by analogy).

The argument begins by enumerating eight general kinds of change or motion. In enumerating kinds of motion Plato sometimes will enumerate with the directions of lateral motion counting for six of the seven or more kinds of motion, but at other times he draws up a list of general kinds of change.¹⁰³ This list falls into the latter category. It is first admitted that some things move and others stand still. Those things that move can move in place or to other places. Respectively they are:

- i. **Rotation** around a central, sessile axis.
- ii. **Locomotion**; either rolling or gliding

if a moving object hits another at rest it will suffer:

¹⁰² I have not given the implicit premises necessary to make this approach deductive validity as it is an outline of the first part of the argument whose details I will presently go on discuss in detail.

¹⁰³ Compare this to the most similar enumeration of kinds of change elsewhere in Plato, namely that which is in the “appendix” to the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, viz. if the one is. *Parm.* 156a4-b8 and 156e3-157b4. Note that the *Parmenides* lacks any distinction between self-moved and other-moved motion or between rational motion (circular) vs. natural/chance motion (rectilinear).

iii. **Decomposition** or separation

if they are both in motion [and collide] then they will go through:

iv. **Combination** or **Mixture**.¹⁰⁴

v. **Increase** or **Augmentation** occurs when things combine

vi. **Decrease** occurs when things separate, provided they maintain their states

vii. **Creation** or **Beginning** occurs when a principle (ἀρχή) increases until a second change and thence to a third change after which it becomes visible.¹⁰⁵

viii. **Destruction** occurs when a thing does not maintain its state after undergoing change, but ceases to be, whereas it is really real (ὄντως ὄν) whenever it remains (itself).

The last two kinds of motion/change are characterizations of motion with respect to mover and moved. There are:

ix. **Motions that move another and are moved by another**

= Motion II, aleomotive motion, in the summary reconstruction above in §III.1.a.

x. **Motions that move another and are moved by themselves**

= Motion I, autokinetic motion, in the summary reconstruction above in §III.1.a

This tenth is immediately recognized to be in harmony with all actions and passions, and is called the change and motion of all things that really are (ἐναπμόττουσαν πᾶσι μὲν ποιήμασι, πᾶσι δὲ παθήμασι, καλουμένην δὲ ὄντως τῶν ὄντων πάντων μεταβολὴν καὶ κίνησιν) (894c). As at 891e and 894a, here again we can only understand ὄντως τῶν ὄντων πάντων in a strong metaphysical sense as referring

¹⁰⁴ I understand mixture from φερόμενοις εἰς ἓν γινόμενα μέσα τε καὶ μεταξὺ τῶν τοιούτων συγχρίνεται, 893e3-5.

¹⁰⁵ Bury regards this as obscure but notes that it is generally understood to be the transition from a point to a line (the first change), a line to a surface (the second), and from a plane to a solid (in the third change). As a solid it is visible. *Laws* vol. 2, 328 n.3. Cf. Aristotle *De Anima* 404b18ff.

to the Forms if we are prepared to say that Plato has jettisoned his more familiar views about Being. For it is characteristic of Being that it does not change.

It comes as no surprise, then, that when asked by the Athenian which motion of the ten is most powerful and most distinctively affective (πασῶν ἐρρόωμενεστάτην τε εἶναι καὶ πρακτικὴν διαφερόντως) (894d1-2) that Clinias should say that the power that can move itself must appear a myriad times more powerful and that all the others are *posterior* to it.

The tenth kind of motion is redubbed the first and the ninth becomes the second. The point of this is perhaps best made if we refer to them as primary and secondary motion. Motion that is not self-caused will always be posterior to some other motion that sets it into motion. At the beginning of a chain of motions there must be something that is capable of initiating change on its own. This would be the self-moving motion. Imagining a world where everything was at rest draws this out. (It is curious that Plato says that many of the naturalists have claimed this. Perhaps he means the moment before cosmogony, as in the case of the mixture that Anaxagoras posits prior to the actions of νοῦς. It is less likely to mean Parmenides, at least if Plato understood his way of truth to be describing intelligible being rather than sensible becoming *cf.* *Theaetetus* 180e, *Sophist* 246bff. Motion could only begin if something moved itself, for there is nothing else to begin motion.

It is then argued that since “self-moving motion is the starting point (ἀρχὴν) of all motions and the first to arise in things at rest and to exist in things in motion, it is of necessity the most ancient and potent change of all.” In contrast, “the motion which is altered by another thing and itself moves others comes second (895b3-7).”

Soul is treated in *Laws X*, like in the *Timaeus*, as something that has come to be. This fact is sometimes resisted because it opposes a point in the argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedrus*. That argument has several points in common with steps 2 and 3 of *Laws X*, not the least of which is that the soul is defined in both as self-moving motion (246e). There, secondary motion –i.e. motion started by another and moving another– is said to die once it ceases to move, i.e. once that other thing which is its own mover ceases to move it. In contrast, a primary motion, i.e. a self-moved motion that also moves others is argued to never end. It never ends or dies because it is always in motion. That it is eternally moving is proven from the fact that it is a source or principle (ἀρχή) of motion that can have neither a beginning nor an end.

Socrates claims that something not having a beginning cannot be destroyed either. He then gives Phaedrus an argument for why a principle of motion can never stop, but for why one can never start. The reason a principle of motion could never stop is that if it did stop the world would cease to move, as there would be nothing else to get it moving again. As in *Laws X* a thought experiment of a world entirely at rest is used. This only proves that a principle cannot cease assuming one cannot start. If no new first principle of motion can start up once the old one stopped, then the old one stopping really would imply a permanent and irrevocable end to motion. So really, this is an argument to show that the conditional holds (no starts \rightarrow no stops) and that the consequent holds. Thus the thought experiment of a world at rest is used to almost the very opposite effect as in the *Laws*. In *Phaedrus* it shows that no first mover could cease, for then could ever start. In the *Laws* it shows that from a world at rest motion would have to start with a first mover.

What is not argued for in the *Phaedrus* is the antecedent of the aforementioned conditional, i.e. that an ἀρχὴ κινήσεως cannot have a beginning. In fact, in the context of the argument it seems quite strange. An ἀρχή is a beginning. It is precisely because primary motions need no antecedent movers in order to move that they can be posited as unprecedented beginnings. The main reason that soul's lack of any beginning is asserted is presumably because a γένεσις would imply the possibility of a φθορά. Socrates claims that $\neg\gamma(x) \rightarrow \neg\phi(x)$. This would entail the contrapositive, $\phi(x) \rightarrow \gamma(x)$, which is a perfectly good Platonic principle, but it does not entail $\gamma(x) \rightarrow \phi(x)$. In fact, in the *Timaeus* $\gamma(x) \rightarrow \phi(x)$ is explicitly denied.

Even if Plato could have denied that the World-soul or any other soul has come to be, he could not claim that the heavenly bodies were real Beings. They must have come-to-be, even if that is to be understood only ontologically and not temporally. Yet the heavens must last forever, and they can do so by means of the consent and support of the Demiurge. Therefore, Plato had good reason for not holding $\gamma(x) \rightarrow \phi(x)$. If Plato can posit generated but indestructible things (as he must), and if the soul is in motion, then it can be treated as a created thing *and* as immortal.

In the *Timaeus* that other reason is its perfectly harmonious proportions, (and the Demiurge's will), and the share of Being that is in its mixture. It is fitting, then, that in his late system, having the resources of a more advanced account of becoming and of immanent mathematical structures, Plato should abandon the claim that the soul as first principle of motion can have no beginning.

Having given his account of the two fundamental kinds of motion, motion that moves itself and motion that is moved by another, the Athenian is ready to proceed to

apply this to the soul and to bodies and thereby prove the priority of the former. Just as self-motion served as the first principle in the argument for immortality in the *Phaedrus*, so, too, will it be the basic postulate in the argument for the priority of the soul and thus the existence of gods.

First, an observation is made that whenever a body, whatsoever its elemental composition is, displays the first kind of motion, i.e. self-motion, it is deemed to be alive. Self-motion is the mark of living. This idea was implicit in the *Phaedrus* at 245c and e. Now it is explicit. Any self-moving thing is a living thing.

This helps lend credence to Plato's next claim, that the essence of soul is self-moving motion. It is a widely held view in his time that the soul is what animates a living thing. If being 'alive' or 'animated' means automatic or self-generated motion, then being the animator of the animate means giving or causing self-motion. The *Phaedrus* puts this a little more precisely; the soul does not exactly make the body a self-mover, it is a self-mover that makes the body appear to itself be a self-mover (*Phdr.* 246c4-6).

Thus, the *Laws* has an argument for the claim that the soul is a self-mover, a member of the first class of motion. By contrast, the *Phaedrus* assumes that soul is a perpetual mover, which means, given the distinction between the two types of motion, that it is a self-mover. Here, however, the soul's role as a life-giver establishes it as a self-mover. This leads to the conclusion that the definition of soul is "the motion capable of moving itself (896a1-2)." While the definition of soul is the same as the *Phaedrus*, the reasoning for it has become more substantial as has the dependence of the account on the conception of living things as self-moving things with souls.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ The link between life and soul is a very important thesis in Plato's philosophy. That much is clear given its function in the final argument for immortality in the *Phaedo* and its place in the psychology and

In addition to the definition cited above, the same line of thought leads to soul being called ‘the primary (πρώτην) beginning (γένεσιν) and motion (κίνησιν) of all things that are (ὄντων), have come to be (γεγονότων), or will be (έσομένων), and of all that is opposite to these’ and ‘the cause (αἰτία) of all of both change (μεταβολή) and motion (κινήσεως) in all things (896a6-b1).’ Clinias concurs with the Athenian in his assessment, saying that “it has arisen as the first principle of motion (γενομένη γε ἀρχὴ κινήσεως) (896b4-5).”

From the fact that soul is prior and cause to the body and the motions associated with it, it is inferred that the affections of soul are also prior, e.g. moods, characters, wishes, calculations, true opinions etc. are prior to length, breadth, depth, and strength (896c5-d5). This may be somewhat hasty, as some states of soul are likely to be due its place in a body e.g. perceptions and thus memories and opinions. The intent of this inference is to establish the priority such things as law (νόμος) over nature (φύσις) as was noted earlier. The basic point of that position, that souls, driven by the moral and intellectual virtues of soul, e.g. intellect (νοῦς) need not justify themselves to a natural law, for they are generative of the latter. It is not clear that to make this point one must posit priority to all the affections of soul over all of those of body.

That issue can be bracketed quite easily, but there is another problem of *proving too much* that these formulations raise: by being named as the cause of all changes, the soul is given too much causal responsibility for too many things in the spatiotemporal world. In the *Timaeus* Plato can claim that while reason is the basic cause for the orderly changes in the world, the receptacle on its own is a secondary but distinct cause of

theology of the *Laws*, but it is also worth noting its role in his ontology in the *Sophist*. I discuss this in covering the link between life, soul, and reason in the Gigantomachy in the next chapter.

motion – the chaotic or disorderly motion of necessity. By having a second (though subordinate) kind of cause reason, the soul, and/or the gods can be exculpated from responsibility for the imperfections of the sensible world. Here, however, because secondary bodily motion is completely taken over by primary psychic motion (897a) soul must be identified as the cause of both good and evil, and so it is at 896d8-11, culminating in a distinction between good and bad souls at 896e4ff, thus occasioning the concern since ancient times that Plato's Athenian spokesman is entertaining a kind of Gnostic dualism of good and evil psychic gods.

As we will see in the next section, as the argument progresses it leaves little room for tying any evil psychic activity to the gods and therefore poses no threat to Platonic theodicy, for the gods will in principle only be the most rational of psychic movers. However, there is a question as to the extent or nature of panpsychism on offer here. Is it that there is merely panpsychism, meaning that the world as a whole (τὸ πᾶν) has a soul and that divine souls take responsibility for the more important cosmic motions, or is this animism, where any given thing is possessed of soul and any properly individuated thing has its own soul? The second is a distinct possibility as soul is said to control and inhabit everything (896d-e1). If it is the latter then the distinction between living and non-living and thus that between primary and secondary motion breaks down. Presumably, that would undermine the theological argument as a whole.

2. Part two: The Best Soul(s) move the Cosmos [896d-898c]

The argument that the best soul(s) move the cosmos discussed below can be summarized with the following reconstruction:

9. The body of the cosmos is moved by either (a) good soul(s) or (a) bad, irrational soul(s). [6]
10. A good soul cleaves to reason to guide everything to an appropriate and successful outcome; a bad soul cleaves to unreason and achieves the opposite results.
11. If the motion of the cosmos (by a soul) is akin to the motion of reason, then the soul(s) that moves it is(are) (a) good, rational soul(s); if its motion is disorderly, then it is moved by (a) bad, irrational soul(s). [7-8, 9, 10]¹⁰⁷
12. The motion of reason is most akin to uniform rotation in place, not locomotion; the motion of unreason is utterly chaotic.
13. [Implicit] The cosmos rotates around a central axis uniformly.
14. [Implicit] Therefore the cosmos is moved by a soul in a manner akin to the motion of reason, not in the disorderly manner of unreason. [9, 11, 12, 13]
15. Therefore, the soul(s) that move(s) the cosmos is(are) of the [best] rational sort. [11,14]

Perhaps the claim that soul is the cause of all is overkill; it does suffice to show that soul is the basic mover of the cosmos, though. On the strength of the previous points, the interlocutors “necessarily agreed” that soul manages (διοικεῖν) the world as well (896e1-2). “The world” here translates “τὸν οὐρανὸν”. Bury and Saunders both translate this as “the heavens,” which is the simplest meaning of “οὐρανός”. This is incorrect here; the term must rather be taken here as a synonym for κόσμος, as Plato and Aristotle use it. It must be so understood for two reasons: in the next line the Athenian insists that at least two souls (rather than merely one) must be understood to control τὸν οὐρανὸν,

¹⁰⁷ I cite 7 and 8 for this reason: it would not be the body that makes the body’s motion rational if the soul did not do so, for the soul is superior to the body.

yet if this only means the heavens it is unclear why a bad soul is necessary, for the heavens most of all display orderly motion. The Athenian goes on to say, “So be it (εἶεν). Soul drives everything in heaven, earth, and the sea with its own motions.” In this case οὐρανὸν does mean the heavens as against land and sea, but only heavens in the sense of cosmos can incorporate all three of these.¹⁰⁸

When souls drive the secondary motions with reason (νοῦν) then they always run straight (897b2-3).¹⁰⁹ But is it that sort of soul or its opposite that “has control over (ἐγκρατὲς) heaven, the earth, and the whole circuit? (πάσης τῆς περιόδου...?)” The ‘whole circuit’ I presume to mean the motion of the entire cosmos or its circumference, i.e. the rotation of the circle of fixed stars. The Athenian will determine this by seeing if the cosmos manifests the kind of motion that is characteristic of intellect (νοῦς). He puts the conditional thus:

“If we are to say that the path and motion of the heavens and all that exists within it [i.e. the cosmos] have the same nature as the motion, revolution, and calculations of intellect and travel cognately [συγγενῶς ἐρχέται], then at the same time it clearly must be said that the best soul cares for the whole cosmos [τὴν ἀρίστην ψυχὴν...ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τοῦ κόσμου παντός] and leads it on that sort of course (897c4-10).”

To satisfy the antecedent, the motion of the cosmos must be akin to the motion of intellect. Hence two things must be known: what sort of motion does the cosmos have and what sort of motion does intellect have?

¹⁰⁸ It is possible that the minor imperfections of celestial motion are meant to be accounted for here, and that earth, heaven, and sea are all taken from further back where soul is said to manage and inhabit everything. However, at 821a-822c it was argued that it was impiety to think that retrograde motion was actual back turning of the gods (or celestial bodies). Rather, astronomy aids in theodicy, showing us that the gods of the heavens are constant in their motions.

¹⁰⁹ The text here is somewhat uncertain. It may have an explicit reference to the soul running straight *as a god* or running divinely. Plato is fond of the etymological connection between θεός and the verb θέω (cf. *Cratylus* 397c-d), so that may be punned here, or perhaps he is comfortable enough with treating νοῦς as divine that he is getting slightly ahead of himself in the argument. Either way, the same conclusions will come out regarding the gods ruling the heavens.

Before turning to the account of the motion of intellect - the astronomical knowledge of the motion of the cosmos is assumed tacitly – we should pause to reflect on just how much is promised in the conditional’s consequent, should the antecedent obtain. If the motion of the cosmos and of intellect are akin, then the cosmos *as a whole* will be *cared for* by the best soul. Notice, that the Athenian does not say the best *sort* of soul; he does not use ψυχῆς γένος as at 897b7, and the generic τοιαύτην of c8 is reserved for the sort of ὁδός that this soul leads the cosmos along. Rather, he uses a definite singular article for *the* best soul (τὴν ἀρίστην ψυχὴν).

This best soul that cares for the whole cosmos (ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τοῦ κόσμου πάντος) drives the cosmos in a uniform rotation that is attributable to its intelligence. We have, then, the **doctrine of the World-soul** here. Moreover, by using ἐπιμελεῖσθαι and later κοσμεῖν the Athenian makes it clear that the World-soul is more than a mere outermost mover (898c4). It is responsible for the maintenance of the cosmos as a whole in some as yet unspecified manner. So we also have the **doctrine of the Care of Soul for Nature/Cosmos**. The statement is brief and not elaborated upon, but it is present and explicit. It is not merely to be read between the lines and inferred from implications as in the Myth of the *Statesman*.

Not surprisingly, the antecedent of the conditional above obtains, (and thus we get the World-soul), for it is shown that of the original ten kinds of motion the kind that moves uniformly in place is most akin to intellect (898a5-6). But what is the argument for this claim? In both the case of the cosmos and reason the motion is: “According to the same things in the same way (ὡσαύτως), both in itself and about the same things and towards the same things and one in account (λόγον) and one arrangement (τάξιν)....” If

we say that and “draw an analogy to the motion of a sphere on a lathe, then we shall never appear to be mean craftsmen of beautiful images in speech (898a8-b3).”¹¹⁰ Such illustrations are necessary, since reason cannot be directly perceived. Just as one “brings on night at noon, by gazing at the sun,” trying to make sense of the motion of intellect with an image will also fail, except by indirect analogy, for one takes on something that is beyond perception’s grasp (897d8-10). Regarding the alternative, locomotion, he asks:

“Surely the (loco)motion which is never the same, neither according to the same things, nor in itself, nor concerning the same things, nor towards/with respect to the same things, nor in one motion, nor in order (κόσμῳ), nor in an arrangement (τάξει), nor in some account would be akin to all that is mindless (ἀνοίας ἀπάσης εἴη συγγενής) (898b5-8)?”

So using descriptions that can apply both to a constant and circumscribed kind of motion and also a steady and focused kind of thought – one that thinks the same things about the same objects and does not waver – it can be claimed that νοῦς and the κόσμος “move” in ways alike. Likewise, the language of wandering can equally apply to the thoughts of inferior souls lacking intelligence and to disorderly locomotion. (The possibility of orderly, rectilinear motion is not considered).¹¹¹

Given these two descriptions of rational and uniform-rotational or of irrational and random motion respectively, it would be “impious to say anything other than these

¹¹⁰ There are many other ways that the Athenian could have stated that the sphere analogy is apt. The choice, then, of craftsmen δημιουργοί is a playful yet suggestive way of nodding to the Being who in the *Timaeus* makes the World-soul and the spherical World-body in fact rather than in mere image. This seems so especially given the equally unnecessary though not inappropriate mention of gazing at the sun as a segue to speaking of illustrations. The sun, we should recall, is Plato’s sensible analog to the Good itself and is called the δημιουργός of sight. For elaboration, see my section on *Republic* VI in the final chapter on the Demiurge.

¹¹¹ While the analogy between the motion of the cosmos (on Plato’s model) and a sphere on a lathe may be apt, there is a worry that the connection between cosmic rotational motion and the “circumspect” or constant awareness on the same unchanging objects by νοῦς is itself no more than an analogy. At present, however, we are not concerned with evaluating the strength of this argument nor even of this cosmological model, but only to ascertain its implications for Plato’s theology.

things are driven by one or more souls that have every excellence.” The motion of the cosmos is rotational and rational, and so must be conducted by rational soul(s) (898c6-8).

3. Part three: Good, Rational Souls Moving the Heavens are Gods [898c9-899d3]

16. One or more entirely excellent [i.e. rational] souls drives the heavens. [15]
17. If one more or more (rational) souls drives the heavens, then one or more rational souls must drive *each* heavenly body [which constitute the heavens].
18. Each heavenly body is driven by one or more rational souls. [16, 17]
19. There are 3 basic options for how the soul can move a heavenly body [19a-e]
 - 19a. Such a soul will drive a heavenly body by means of a body or not by a body.
 - 19b. If by means of a body then either: I. by that same body, or II. by another body.
 - 19c. If by means of the same body, then the soul inhabits and animates the heavenly body, and drives it like a chariot (**Option I**). [See Diagram VIII below].
 - 19d. If by means of another body, then the soul drives the heavenly body by pushing it with another body such as fire or air (**Option II**).
 - 19e. If not by means of a body, then by some marvelous, other power (**Option III**).
20. E.g. (In one of those three ways) a perfectly good, rational soul must drive the sun, which brings us light (and countless other benefits) [18,19]
21. Per 20, with regard to the moon, planets, stars, etc. as well as the sun. [18, 20]
22. If (a) rational, totally virtuous soul(s) drive(s) around the sun, the moon, etc. (and with all the accompanying benefits), it is clearly a god.
23. There is/are such (a) god(s) [18, 21,22]

Clinias has drawn the conclusion that one or many souls with every excellence drives (περιάγειν) “these things” (αὐτά). “These things,” judging from the Athenian’s

immediately preceding statement, are everything (πάντα) or more specifically the circumference of Heaven/the Cosmos (οὐρανοῦ περιφορὰν). At this point in the argument it becomes relevant to discuss the different heavenly bodies in order to arrive at a suitably *polytheistic* conclusion.

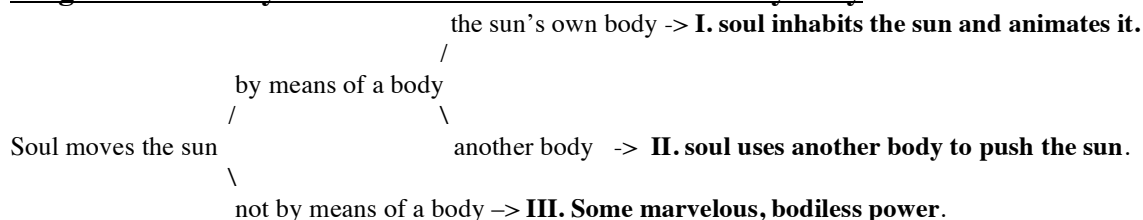
When the Athenian speaks specifically of the cosmos or Heavens as a whole, presumably the outermost sphere of the fixed stars or the whole cosmos around a sessile Earth at the center, he speaks of ‘*the* best soul’, in the singular, caring for it and setting it in order (ἐπιμελουμένην καὶ κοσμοῦσαν), meaning the World-soul (897c4-5 and 898c2-4). Elsewhere, speaking of a plurality of things, “all of heaven and earth and sea”, the Athenian still uses a singular form of ψυχή, albeit without a definite article (thus it is probably abstract), just as he did in saying that soul must manage the heavens since it manages and dwells in everything (896e8-9 and 896d10-e2). He had raised the question of ‘one or many’ souls at 896e4-6, but in saying no fewer than two he switched to talking about *kinds* of soul. And even though he left open the possibility of there being many good souls, it is Clinias who raises the question about polytheism anew at 898c7-8 with “one or many a soul having every excellence”. The Athenian philosopher’s usage of “soul” always in the singular is more suited to a kind of henotheism or at least to emphasizing Plato’s novel idea of one great World-soul.

Now, however, he switches to a distributive usage of “soul” (still in the singular though), moving each of several different bodies in the heavens: “Sun and Moon and all the stars – if in fact soul drives them all, then wouldn’t one also drive each (898d3-4)?” Clinias agrees enthusiastically (898d5). To make the point, the Athenian picks one particular heavenly body as his illustration: the Sun. An adage about blinding oneself by

looking directly at the Sun had been mentioned at 897d8-10 as a way of introducing to Clinias and Megillus the need for an indirect or analogous perceptible model to grasp the nature of the motion of intellect (νοῦς), which is itself imperceptible. Indulging in a clever bit of play, the Athenian now uses the Sun as his illustration.

The soul that moves the sun moves it one of three ways: either the soul lives within the sun like ourselves inhabit our bodies and moves it from within, or soul in the form of some other body such as air or fire moves the sun from without, or it moves it some third way, unspecified except that it does not involve body (898e8-899a10). In other words we have a disjunctive tree:

Diagram VIII. Ways for a divine soul to move a heavenly body



This soul is regarded as a god. It is not explained why moving the sun in one of these three ways suffices to make it a god, and that is a serious gap in the argument, but since the sun is itself commonly thought to be a god (although not by the atheist opponent who thinks it a stone or fire), the soul responsible for moving it and making it give light deserves an even better claim to divinity.¹¹² The sun is only a case study. The same account holds good for the stars, moon, years, months, and seasons – i.e. all the celestial phenomena (899b3-4). It is concluded that the good (souls) of these heavenly objects are gods. Thales would seem to be right that “everything is full of gods (899b6-9).”

¹¹² The text seems to be interrupted and in poor shape at 899a7. It is possible that there is a lacuna here and that the remainder of the argument is either lost or was never completed by Plato at the time of his death.

It should be noted that “εἴπερ ψυχὴ περιάγει πάντα, ἃρ’ οὐ καὶ ἐν ἑκάστων;” at 898d3-4 leaves open the possibility that one soul is doing all the moving of each of these bodies, and even at the end of this argument, at the only point in the argument where he uses “souls” in plural, the Athenian still holds open the possibility that *one* soul of the best kind is moving each body individually (899b5-6).¹¹³ However, in the next line we have ἀγαθαὶ in feminine plural, so it would seem that a plurality of good souls (plural) are implicated as being gods. Thus, returning to the previous line we should understand the question of ψυχὴ or ψυχαί to be posed distributively to each of the heavenly bodies. In other words, there is at least one soul moving the moon, at least one moving the sun, etc.

§IV. Conclusions and Questions about Plato’s Immanent Theology from the Foregoing

Unless the atheist can show that soul is not the first thing that comes to be (ψυχὴν γένεσιν ἀπάντων εἶναι πρώτην) and what followed thence, he should henceforth live the rest of his life believing in the gods.¹¹⁴ What can we conclude about Plato’s theology, understood in a minimalist way, from this argument, and what is left open and perhaps unsolved without the resources of other nuances and levels in his theory? First the simplest points:

A. What is the theological-cosmological picture that emerges from this argument?

1. Insofar as it is only trying to show that there are gods, it shows that:
 - a. The gods as the souls of the heavenly bodies
 - b. There is a World-soul, the best soul, for the cosmos

¹¹³ “ἐπειδὴ ψυχὴ μὲν ἢ ψυχαὶ πάντων τούτων αἷτια ἐφάνησαν”

¹¹⁴ I understand ἡγούμενον at 899c9 in a very weak sense, meaning “believing” or “accepting”. Bury translates it “venerating”, but that degree of commitment seems premature, for the youth might yet believe that the gods, though extant, are indifferent to human kind.

If the Athenian is strictly sticking to the task of showing that souls move the heavens, then certain aspects of the brief account of the World-soul go beyond the minimum needed. For instance, it is not necessary to claim that it cares and arranges the whole cosmos and all that is within it. It might suffice to show merely that there is an outermost first mover. It is hard to determine without an elaboration of what qualifies the rational souls moving the heavenly bodies to be counted as gods. As we mentioned above, that crucial final step of the argument is missing. However, the argument is also trying to establish that soul and what is of soul is prior to body and the corporeal, thus showing that souls order and maintain the cosmos, so undercutting corporealistic atheism. The theological picture that emerges from satisfying this requirement of the argument (necessary to show that νόμος is prior to φύσις as well) is more robust:

2. Insofar as it is trying to establish the authority/priority of soul over body
 - a. Soul is the cause of all
 - b. Full Doctrine of World-soul and Care of Soul for the Cosmos
 - c. Panpsychism

Now, we cannot satisfy the first goal without satisfying the second, but it is not clear why the second requires the dramatic claim that soul is the cause of every change. As I argued above, this runs the risk of dissolving the animate/inanimate distinction, yet that distinction is precisely what grounds the claim that soul is self-motion and thus prior while body has secondary motion. In the *Timaeus*, which is free to investigate cosmology more deeply given its primary concerns and its internal audience (i.e. Socrates, not Clinias and Megillus or an Atheist youth), necessity can be isolated as an independent factor. Such an option is not totally absent from the *Laws* as the account of types of causes at 716a-b shows.

What then, about the ontology of soul in comparison with the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*?

B. *The Ontology of the Soul that is here, that is not here*

1. The absence of metaphysics here and throughout the *Laws*
 - a. Looseness of metaphysical terminology (e.g. ὄντως ὄν/οὐσία)
 - b. No clear being/becoming dualism maintained in the choice of language
2. But Soul is the oldest thing that has come-to-be
 - a. The argument for immortality in the *Phaedrus*
 - i. Common points: soul as first mover, cause of life
 - ii. “Thought experiment”: the ‘Frozen World’
 - iii. Indestructible/Unending \leftrightarrow Uncreated/Uninitiated
 - b. Revision in Late Plato: how and why *Laws X* departs from the *Phaedrus*
 - i. More complex account of *Becoming* in *Philebus*, *Timaeus*
 - ii. Not necessarily temporal in meaning
 - iii. Soul as a thing that has come-to-be here and in *Timaeus*
 - iv. Opposite use of the ‘Frozen World’ example
 - v. Why the new treatment in the *Laws* is necessary and better

Even though the Athenian is not careful to observe any hard metaphysical distinctions in the language of being and becoming in *Laws X*, it is still striking that soul should again and again be referred to as a γένεσις. At 899c7 the Athenian could have just as easily called ψυχή the first ὄρχή, thus avoiding any tension with the *Phaedrus*, but chooses γένεσιν instead. Above, I argue that the *Phaedrus*’ argument neither entailed nor required that everything that comes to be must be perishable. Plato is willing to forego that claim in this context, but questions are left open about what *causes* soul, since soul is said to come to be (*L.* 899c, 904a-b, 967d).

On the other hand, there is a respect in which the limited theology in *Laws X* avoids the issues of generation and destruction as they bear on the gods. Generally speaking:

3. There is no strict account of body or how soul/reason orders nature

In the *Timaeus* the cosmos as a whole, both body and soul, can be treated as a god, but in the *Laws*, as in the *Phaedrus*, only souls are identified as gods. Moreover, that divine souls move the sun and planets by inhabiting them, hence being animals/living things, is only one option, whereas the *Timaeus* decides that they do reside in these bodies and ride them like chariots (41d-e). What accounts for the difference?

A god must be immortal; for the Greeks that is a “definitional truth”. But if all bodies are perishable, then bodies cannot be gods, nor can body-soul unions. Now, the *Timaeus* has an account of why the cosmos and the stars and planets, though physical, can be immortal. That account has two parts: the will of the Demiurge and the mathematical bonds by which he surely keeps it. Neither is fitting for this discussion. Unlike Timaeus, who has a philosopher, Socrates, as his audience, the Athenian is speaking to Clinias and Megillus and he is concerned that even the limited theology that he presents them with will be too unfamiliar and difficult.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the argument he rehearses for them is directed at a wayward young atheist. The deeper mysteries of the Father and Maker or the triangles are not for him.

We have, then, a psychic theology that includes a World-soul and that contains a role for soul in ordering and maintaining the cosmos, but is not well-developed or refined. Soul simply takes over other motions and disposes things for the best (as with the gods) or worse. Furthermore, divine souls are souls that move according to νοῦς, and νοῦς is attributed to souls in the *Laws* at 961d1-11. In recapping the arguments in *Laws* XII, the Athenian even says that reason is the supreme power among the heavenly bodies (996e, 967d-e). So we even have a noetic element in the theology, too. However, we do

¹¹⁵ Hence the prayer 887cf. *at* and the warning at 892dff.

not have an explanation of how the cosmos itself can be divine or even immortal. For that Plato requires his full natural philosophy with its account of mathematical structures and its enlarged theology.

PART TWO – PLATO’S TRANSCENDENT THEOLOGY

In the first part of this dissertation, Chapters 1-3, we explored Plato’s immanent theology. Now, in chapters 4-6 we will try to reach an understanding of his transcendent theology. We showed that according Plato, the gods who are immanent in this, our sensible world of change, space, and time are divine souls attached to the indestructible bodies of the Earth, the seven classical planets, the fixed stars, and to the entire cosmos as a whole. The gods of the Earth, Sun, Moon, and the other five planets, played a more significant role in Plato’s cosmology than the individual gods who are the fixed stars, and even more important than they were was the living cosmos itself. The soul of the cosmos, which animates, moves, and rules the entire universe with its intellect was likened to Zeus, King of the gods.

In the *Timaeus*, it seemed possible that the World-soul might actually be the soul of the cosmos as a whole, the Earth and all seven planets. In that case, “Zeus” really would stand above all the other created gods in the heavens, with his unique task of creating and sustaining mortal bodies and the mortal parts of the soul, guarding time by sustaining the rational motions of the circle of the same and the seven bands of the circle of the different, and guiding the souls of men to moral and intellectual excellence through its mathematically appreciable beauty. But even if the Earth and the seven planets have their own souls, the regal World-soul would be no less than *primus inter pares*.

We saw that Plato invented panpsychism as an alternative to the natural philosophies that he saw as corrosive to morality and uninformative for cosmology, as they lacked any real explanation (meaning rational and teleological) of why there is a beautiful order evident throughout “nature”, rather than mere chaos, or why the world

was any better off being the way that it is, rather than any other way. Their reliance on the material mechanisms of unintelligent elementary bodies (auxiliary causes) left their accounts lacking in real causes, i.e. intelligent agents who could act purposefully, having knowledge and a view towards the good, rather than mindlessly careening through space haphazardly. Thus he regarded them as at best paying lip-service to the ancient wisdom of the rule of Nous over the Heavens and the Earth, and at worst as openly endorsing a godless corporealism that explicitly denies that there is any kind of benevolent, divine intelligence steering the cosmos and holding human beings morally accountable for their actions.

But we also saw that in his late thought, he came to see the soul as belonging to the ontological category of things that have come to be. All things that come to be must have a cause antecedent to them in time or at least in existence and power, and for immortal souls and the immortal bodies of the gods to last throughout all time, they would require an eternal, ungenerated kind of being, to sustain them. Therefore, an account of Plato's theology that ends with the World-soul, is an incomplete one. Plato needed his immanent theology of panpsychism in order to solve the cosmological "implementation problem" of nous. But in order to solve the metaphysical problem of accounting for the uninterrupted persistence throughout all time of these *generated indestructibles*, he would have to posit a metaphysically superior and prior hypostasis as their eternal cause. In other words, he would need a transcendent theology.

The Demiurge would seem to be the obvious first candidate for Plato's transcendent god, as he is the father and maker of the created gods, whose immutably good will is eternal proof against their dissolution. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to

understand just what the Demiurge is or represents. It is also a great challenge to give an account of him and a transcendent theology for Plato that coherently integrates everything that the late dialogues have to tell us about the gods, the soul, and nous.

The single greatest tension seems to be the result of two inferences about the Demiurge, both of which seem highly reasonable *prima facie*, but which also seem thoroughly incompatible. On the one hand, souls are required for intellect to play a real teleological and causal role in the world; that is what it means to say that the World-soul is Plato's solution to the problem of the implementation of nous. The Demiurge is supremely good, and the best of causes. On the *E*-reading, it is he who once caused the universe to be transformed from the chaotic flux of the primordial receptacle into a moving image of eternity and the finest possible imitation of the most perfected and complete eternal model. On the *P*-reading, the created world has always been as it is now, but if one were to abstract away the constant metaphysical contribution of the father and maker of the gods to the world, then, on its own, it would be nothing more than utterly chaotic space. Either way, the Demiurge is the best of all causes, and he bears the ultimate responsibility and deserves the ultimate credit for the goodness and beauty of the created world. The Demiurge, then, should be a supreme intellect. Therefore, he should have a soul.

On the other hand, the Demiurge created *all* souls. Soul, is a changing, moving thing - it is perpetual self-motion (!)- and therefore something that has come-to-be. The Demiurge, on the other hand, is described explicitly as an eternal, intelligible being, and the best of them, whose natural state is to abide at rest. If he were to be generated, though, then he would require a cause. This cause, and not he, would then be the best of

causes. And that cause could in turn either be eternal and ungenerated, and so not a soul, or it could be generated and in need of a cause, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

To resolve this tension, or to conclude with any confidence that it is truly irresolvable, we will need to better understand: (A) the exact nature of intellect's dependence on and inherence in soul; and (B) the relationship between the Demiurge and intellect, especially when we consider them both as paradigmatic representatives of causation. Chapter 4 focuses on (A), the principle of the Inherence of Intellect, while chapter 5 discusses (B) by critically examining the widely held assumption that the Demiurge is or represents nous/intellect, i.e. what I am calling the ΔN thesis. First, I will argue in chapter 4, that Plato does subscribe to the Inherence of Intellect principle *without exception*. Then, in chapter 5, I argue against traditional (Early/Middle/Neo)-Platonism and almost all the contemporary interpreters, that Plato did not endorse the ΔN thesis. After giving my arguments for these positions, I will at last be ready in chapter 6 to defend my positive account of the identity of the Demiurge.

Chapter 4. *Intellect and its inherence in the Soul*

In this chapter I will discuss the **Inherence of Intellect** principle, the claim often repeated in the late dialogues, that intellect is only to be found in souls. I will begin by discussing Plato's motivations for making such a claim, especially as can be inferred from the activities and functions of the World-soul discussed in the last three chapters. Then I will survey the textual incidences of the principle. Finally, I will "debunk" the smoking-gun passage in the *Philebus* that is most frequently pointed to as evidence that Plato posits a non-inherent/non-immanent form/Form of Intellect. Thus, by the end of the chapter, we will have the Inherence principle firmly established, in order that it can be deployed in chapter 5 to the evaluation of the thesis that the Demiurge is Intellect/*Nous*.

§I. The Inherence of Intellect

In the previous three chapters Plato's theory of the World-soul was discussed, and it was analyzed in terms of theology, specifically a theology whose divinities are immanent to the world of change. An important question must now be asked: how does Intellect (νοῦς - *nous*) figure into this theology? Is it the case that in Plato's immanent theology, the cosmic intellect Socrates had hoped to learn about from Anaxagoras comes to be incorporated in the World-soul and other divine souls, or does Intellect stand apart?

In the previous chapters I suggested that the World-soul was precisely the "mechanism" through which intellect can guide the temporal world. That is to say that the cosmos is ordered and maintained *intelligently* because the primary causal agents within it, souls, are *intelligent*. (Bodies, on the other hand, are at best secondary or auxiliary causes). In the *Phaedo*'s intellectual biography, Socrates complains that Anaxagoras' *nous*, though it once sounded promising to him, does no explanatory work

as *an intellect*, i.e. as something with knowledge of what is good and which arranges the world purposefully. Rather, when it comes to explaining why the earth is at the center of the cosmos, why the heavens form and the like, Anaxagoras turns to vortices and the motions of corporeal elements such as air, water, and aether.

These are not true causes, and Socrates wants to know how intellect actually manifests itself and causally affects the world, non-materialistically but intelligently. Plato's invention of a World-soul that *possesses* intellect is his solution to this problem. Souls, unlike bodies, can have intellect and in virtue of it act purposefully. As primary movers, they can take primary responsibility for how the bodies in the cosmos will move, although these bodies will have some tendency to wander on their own.

Furthermore, the system of primary, intelligent psychic movers and unintelligent but passive and secondary corporeal movers is Plato's alternative to the cosmologies of the natural philosophers' wherein the cosmos comes about by nature, chance, or necessity. As argued in *Laws X*, these systems undercut Arguments from Design, which were the mainstay of Socratic responses to sophistic impiety before Plato. However, with soul as the primary mover, and body as the passive secondary mover, nature and necessity can be shown to be posterior to and under the control of intellect. Therefore, Plato can restore good design (by the gods) to its proper place as the explanation for the beauty and regularity of the universe.

From the foregoing it would seem that Plato has every reason to want to associate intellect with the soul as closely as possible, for this both solves the "implementation problem" of how intellect can be causally efficacious in yielding a beneficent cosmic order, and it undercuts any (proto)-atheist attempt to replace or redefine intellect with the

corporeal activities of nature, necessity, and chance. Plato's means for ruling out of question any corporealistic or naturalistic redefinition of intellect à la Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, or Archelaus is the **Inherence of Intellect** principle. This is the thesis that *nous*/intellect only ever exists in souls. It does not exist as a body or even in a body, unless that body is animated by a soul that possesses intelligence.

The above are cosmological and theological reasons that Plato has for maintaining the **Inherence** principle. I do not wish it to be inferred that those are his only reasons. There are also strong reasons for inherence relating to Plato's epistemology or the meeting place between his epistemology and ontology. In chapter 2 we saw that in virtue of having intelligible being, sameness, and otherness in its mixture, soul could apprehend the intelligible. This would mean that the soul, and in particular the World-soul would have its intellect nourished and guided by the unchanging forms, thus making its psychic motions as intelligent – i.e. as self-centered (meaning self-revolving) and constantly self-consistent – as possible.

While this shows the affinity of intellect for the intelligible, it also shows their separateness. Intellect must be akin to the intelligibles if it is to apprehend them, and that is why it **is**/is in the immortal kind of soul. On the other hand, it is only by being separate from the intelligible that the intellect can be in a soul and thus a rational principle of motion for things anything that moves or changes.

In the next chapter, I will be concerned with denying that the Demiurge, who is an intelligible being, is also *nous* or Intellect. There I will expand on this sort of point and how, for Plato, νοῦς - *nous* (intellect) and νοητός - *noētos* (intelligible) are in principle

distinct. (I might add that the reference in §II below to *Epistle VII* contains reasoning along these lines as well).

Inherence is a loaded philosophical term, and I believe that it is only with Aristotle's philosophy that there emerges a distinction between independently existing primary substances and their dependently subsisting or inhering modes or accidents. Therefore, I wish to justify my usage of "inherence" and clarify the precise meaning that it has here.

For Aristotle a substance (οὐσία) in the primary sense is: 1) a particular individual, rather than a type or repeatable, such that it cannot be predicated or "said of" multiple things; and 2) an entity that the other kinds of being are "in" but itself is not "in" any other being. Consequently the other kinds of being cannot exist without being in or belonging to a substance. It is an additional mark of a primary substance that 3) it can persist through taking on contraries. If anything at all in Plato's ontology resembles an Aristotelian substance, then it is the soul. Significantly, either the parts of the soul or the whole soul itself endures changes in its various dispositions while remaining numerically the same. Moreover Plato's dualism of body and soul is a substantive dualism; the soul exists independently of the body and moves the body as well as itself. The sense in which the soul is "in" a body for Plato is fundamentally a spatial one, and one of ownership or control, the soul owning, controlling the body it animates; it is not one of ontological dependence or inherence.

Thus when I say that Plato is claiming that *intellect always inheres in (a) soul*, I mean this: that Intellect always and only exists together with souls as a part of souls; by 'a part of' I mean either (1) a mereological portion, which when separated from the other

mereological portions of the substance would then itself be a substance (and in this case still a soul¹¹⁶), or (2) an attribute or property of a substance which is inseparable from said substance. I think Plato relates intellect to soul in both ways. Given our limited purposes here, equivocations between these two senses of parthood are for the time being relatively harmless, for in neither sense of “part of” is there ever (an) intellect which is not *a part of* soul, nor even (an) intellect alongside but not *in* (a) soul nor *belonging to* (a) soul.

§II. Evidence of the ‘Inherence of Intellect’ Claim

1. Euthydemus 287d-e

Let us now begin our analysis of the relationship between Intellect and Souls by looking at the texts where Plato asserts what I am calling the “Inherence of Intellect” claim. The earliest occurrence of the statement or something very close to it is in the *Euthydemus*. During his examination of the intellectual charlatans Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, Socrates asks the latter what the sense of one of the sophist’s statements was if not an admittance of defeat. Socrates’ exact words are, “τί σοι ἄλλο νοεῖ τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα...” or “What, for you, does this phrase comprehend besides (287c1-2)....” Dionysodorus seizes on this formulation and makes a last-ditch effort to stave off refutation with a characteristically bald equivocation on the word “comprehend”. Breaking the elenchus’ rules of order, he challenges Socrates’ question rather than answering it and asks, “Which is it – are comprehending things possessors of soul, or do soulless things also comprehend?” Socrates answers, “The possessors of soul.” Dionysodorus then asks Socrates if he knows of any phrases that have souls; Socrates admits that he does not. No one is very much swayed when Dionysodorus concludes by

¹¹⁶ I allude here to the view in the *Timaeus* at - hinted at in the myth of Glaucus in Republic X, that Intellect or Reason is the only true part of the soul that survives separation from the body.

challenging Socrates' question, "What, for you, does this phrase comprehend besides..."

The verb 'voeiv' can mean to think or comprehend, and in the case of utterances it means *to signify* or *to mean*.

In itself the argument amounts to little besides a portrayal of Dionysodorus' intellectual unscrupulousness and a particularly clear object lesson in the fallacy of equivocation. However, it does show Socrates concurring that things that voeiv are only ones that have souls. The fact that the point originates in the word-chopping mouth of Dionysodorus should not deter us from ascribing concurrence to Plato. If nothing else, the fact that an echo of this same argument is used by the Platonist author of *Epistle VII* to distinguish voûς from words and phrases, tells us that it was a line of reasoning used in earnest by the Academy:

"[The] Fourth [category is] knowledge (*epistēmē*), intelligence (*nous*), and true opinion (*alēthēs doxa*) about what is. And these together must be supposed not to be in utterances (*phōnais*) [viz. names/words and speeches/accounts - the first and second categories respectively], nor in the diagrams of bodies (*en sōmatōn schēmasin*) [i.e. the third category], but as present in (*enon* – ἐνόν) souls (*Ep. VII* 342c4-6)."

The statement in the *Euthydemus* itself comes very close to the Inherence of Intellect principle, but it falls a little short of the principle's full expression. In the absence of the term "voûς" and without the closely related claims about the soul as life and the cause of motion or that voûς is a cause of order, Socrates' admission seems to lack any of the cosmological or metaphysical significance that the Inherence of Intellect principle typically has. Indeed, it might seem to be quite a mundane claim if all that Socrates means is that the things that *think* have souls, i.e. are alive.

However, it is not so obvious a point as we might at first imagine. We have no record or report of anyone integrating *nous* with psyche prior to Democritus, and in

earlier Greek writers it is not typically the psyche that is the seat of thought and feeling.¹¹⁷ However, Aristotle claims that thought or sensation, along with motion, is one of the two basic characteristics that his predecessors have attributed to those things possessing soul (the animate) and not to the inanimate (*DeAn* I.2 403b25-7).

In the previous chapter I suggested that if Aristotle's report is accurate, viz. if Democritus really did equate *nous* with psyche, then Plato might have taken inspiration for the inherence of intellect principle from the atomist. This would be wonderfully ironic, since this claim is integral to the Doctrine of the World-soul and thus Plato's anti-materialist cosmology.

Now, I think there is good reason to think that Aristotle is correct on this point, if for no other reason than the very sound internal logic of his report and the very sensible reason he gives for *why* Democritus would have equated the two. He says that of those who combine the two functions, Democritus expressed himself more subtly/smoothly (*glaphurōterōs* - γλαφυρωτέρως) on the grounds of positing these two characteristics than rest of those who posited both, by identifying *psuchē* with *nous* and making it a maximally subtle (thus passable) and indivisible body (405a8-9). The 'rest' include, first of all, those who made soul a self-moving number, viz. Plato and some members of the Early Academy (404b27-30). The others mentioned include Anaxagoras, whom Aristotle claims to have distinguished *psuchē* from *nous* but effectively to have conflated them in practice (405a13-19), and other, earlier thinkers, whom he does not report as making the identification between soul and intellect (405a20ff)¹¹⁸. Because, on the hand, the soul *was*

¹¹⁷ Furley [1956]. Cf. Bremmer [1983].

¹¹⁸ Of these, Diogenes of Apollonia is the one who by far can be most plausibly assumed to have located the source of cognitive and motive functions in one principle, viz. "air" (*aēr* - ἀήρ) and, *perhaps*, to have

already seen as a source of motion and literally *animation*, while on the other hand *nous* was the seat of thought/knowledge par excellence, to have combined them into a single type of thing would have been an especially deft means on Democritus' part of combining the functions of generating motion and being the seat of thought/sensation. The next school to unite these functions – and to unite the soul and the intellect – would be Plato and his academy, and Aristotle had little sympathy for what he understood as their 'arithmetico-kinetic' conception of soul.

If, on the other hand, Plato did not adapt his Inherence Principle from Democritus' work, then the *Euthydemus* passage offers us an alternative hypothesis of its origin. Perhaps the Immanence principle, which ultimately became a cosmological and metaphysical thesis, began its life more humbly as an argument to distinguish language from thought and knowledge. The suggestion would then be that in noticing that words "stand still" and cannot explain themselves, while thought/knowledge is a moving thing in the thinker/knower, Plato arrived at a fundamental connection between *nous* and psyche. This is speculative, but it is worth some brief consideration if only because it offers a novel connection between Plato's thoughts about dialectic and his suspicion of philosophical writing, on the one hand, and his psychology on the other.

2. *Republic* VI's Sun Analogy - *Visibles : Sight (in soul) :: Intelligibles : Intellect (in soul)*

In book VI of the *Republic* Socrates gives his celebrated analogy of the sun to help explain, indirectly, what the Form of the Good is, which he is unwilling to address directly (*R.* 506d8ff, 516b4-517c6, 518c4-d2). From 506d8-509d4 he claims that the sun:

1a. Is not sight, nor that in which it comes to be, the eye,

associated this in some way with the soul (*DeAn.* 405a21-25). That does not amount to identifying *nous* with *psuchē*, nor even *psuchē* with *aēr*.

2a. but it is the cause of visible things being seen because it is the ultimate source of light, which is what makes things visible to sight.

3a. As a source of light, it is itself a visible thing (although, again, it is not vision).

4a. Furthermore, it is the ultimate cause of the generation and sustenance of all visible things (i.e. it is responsible for the seasons, for growth, plant-life, warmth, fire, etc.).

As the sun, which is a god and the progeny of the good, is to visible things, so the Form of the Good, the sun's "father", is to intelligible things. The sun is the sovereign of visible things in the visible realm while the Form of the Good is sovereign over the intelligible beings in the intelligible realm. That is to stress the metaphysical aspect of the analogy, but it is an epistemological one as well (even primarily). Hence the conclusions drawn by analogy about the good are that:

1b. It is not "intelligence" (*nous* - νοῦς) itself, for it is something more beautiful,

2b. but it is the cause of intelligible things being intelligible and permits them to be known or "intellected".

3b. As the ultimate source of intelligibility it is itself an intelligible being (*noēton* - νοητόν or, being *grasped by* intellect a *nooumenon* – νοούμενον).

4b. Furthermore, it is the ultimate cause of the timeless being of all intelligible things. It is even responsible for the existence of the Form of Being, and it subsists 'beyond Being' in way that is 'yet more beautiful'.

The text gives us 1b-4b directly. The Form of the good is not intellect/knowledge, but is intelligible. Now that conclusion will be very helpful for denying **ΔN**, provided that I am correct that the Demiurge is the Form of the Good, but we are still at an earlier

stage in the thesis' argument; we are trying to establish the **inherence of intellect** principle. What does the foregoing have to do with that?

In **1a** I pointed out what is said at 508a10-b2, that the sun is *neither* sight, nor *that* in which it comes to be, i.e. the eye. As the eye is to vision and light, so the soul is to knowledge and intelligibility (508d4ff). Later, at 511d7, all four types of cognition on the divided line, including intellect/knowledge, the highest, are called conditions or affections (*pathēmata* - παθήματα) in the soul (*en tēi psuchēi* - ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ). Taking all that was said about the sun, and the entirety of the analogy between sun/the Good and vision/intellect, *mutatis mutandis* **1b**. should be expanded to read that the good:

1b*. “It is not “intelligence” (*nous* - νοῦς) itself, for it is something more beautiful, nor that in which [intelligence] comes to be, the soul.”

So this passage seems to suggest strongly that A) Intelligible and intellect are distinct just as visible and vision are distinct; B) intellect is in the soul; and, therefore, C) there is not some kind of Intelligible intellect that is not in the soul. For if there were a Form of Intellect, then the Intelligible Intellect and the knowledge/intellect of it would be the same. Yet that seems to make a hash of the rather clear distinctions here between the object of cognition, the faculty of cognition, and the cognition/cognitive state (as well as the Sun and the Good as those objects of cognition which are the causes of all objects of the comparable form of cognition and the cause of the possibility of that type of cognition).

3. *Sophist* 248e7-249a8

The first statement of the principle in the late works we will examine is in the *Sophist*. The context for the principle's introduction is this: having used the example of

the soul to force a revision in the ontology of the gentler, corporealist “Giants” to a more generically dynamic viewpoint; I take this thorough dynamist view, already rejected in and for leaving knowledge impossible, to be implicitly criticized a few pages later when the Visitor rejects the possibility that all Being is always changing (*Soph.* 249b8-c8). The Eleatic Visitor is now raising problems for the changeless ontology of intelligible Being advocated by the “Friends of Forms.”

The Eleatic Visitor has two lines of argument for showing that *Being-Changed* and *Change* respectively must be admitted as part of Being. The first is a fallacious argument for the existence of *Being-Changed*. The argument claims that since the subject changes by *knowing*, the object must change by *being known*; or, more generally, that if the subject is an agent (at least grammatically), then the object must really be a patient. { Often, when the grammatical subject of a proposition becomes agent with respect to some object, then the object becomes a patient. For instance, if Socrates starts to teach Plato, then Plato starts to be taught by Socrates. However, it is unjustified to conclude that anytime a subject is really changed and with respect to some object, then the object is likewise changed. This is fallacious in the case of knowledge because something else coming to know *x* need not presuppose any intrinsic change in *x*. It guarantees, at most, a change in *x*’s “Cambridge properties”. }

The Visitor points out that the objects of knowledge, understanding, and intellect must be at rest in order to be known, understood, and comprehended (249b6-c7). It would be a paradox if, on the one hand, a presupposition of knowledge is that the known is unchanging, and, on the other hand, achieving knowledge of the known changes it. In the *Theaetetus* Plato points out that this would lead to skepticism about the possibility of

knowing an object in itself (*Tht.* 153d_{ff}). However, a change in mere “Cambridge properties” does not suffice to change the object ‘in itself’, such that a Being is now changing. So, perhaps Plato saw in this argument the same fallacy that Aristotle recognized in it, or perhaps the student was correcting his teacher (*Top.* 113a25-32).

Either way, this dubious argument is immediately and abruptly followed by the argument that Change must be part of Being. It is the latter argument which really captures the interlocutors’ attentions (and I suspect Plato’s, as well); for although the pair of arguments are meant to establish that both Change and Being-Changed require a place in the ontology Being, it is only Change that appears later as one of the five Greatest Kinds (249b2-3).

The argument begins by appealing to the repulsiveness of the idea that, lacking motion, what is most real of all lacks intelligence and life too. “For God’s sake, will we really be so easily convinced,” the Visitor asks Theaetetus, “of the truth that motion (κίνησις), life, soul, and reason (φρόνησις) are not present in what totally is, and neither does it live nor reason, but that silent and august, having no intelligence, it stands motionless (248e7-249a2)?” Theaetetus is appropriately concerned, answering “We would be agreeing to a dangerous statement, Stranger (249a3).”

The argument then proceeds by accepting that what is totally real has intelligence and concludes that without motion there will never be any kind of intelligence (249b5-6). Then, one by one, life, soul, and finally motion are also shown to belong to intelligence through a series of necessary connections. Thus, the Visitor asks Theaetetus if they would say that it has intelligence (νοῦν) but lacks life (ζωὴν), and Theaetetus does not see how that could be (249a4-5). Next, the Visitor brings in soul: “If we say that both of these are

in it, then won't we say that it has these in [a] soul?", and Theaetetus knows no other way that it [Being(?)] could (249a6-8). Finally, it is concluded that Being must be moving as well. "What then, <we say that it has> intellect, and life, and soul, but being alive it stands totally motionless?" asks the Visitor, and it seems to Theaetetus that all this is absurd (249a9-b1).

Motion is implicated with Being because it has been shown that the ontology of Being cannot do without psyche and life. If being alive did not already imply that a Being with intelligence was in motion, then the fact that it has soul, i.e. the principle of self-motion, should settle the matter. But why must it have soul? Because the only thing in which and by which something can have both life and intelligence is a soul. Strictly speaking, at 249a4 the connection between Intellect and Soul is mediated by Life. Intellect cannot exist without life and it is the soul that makes something alive. However, rather than reading the next point as saying that only the conjunction of life and intellect must be in a soul, we should probably understand it in a logically looser way such that it claims that life and intellect are each, individually, only ever held in a soul (249a6-7). Rather than taking the claim to be:

$[L(x) \wedge I(x)] \rightarrow S(x)$ we should prefer:

$[L(x) \rightarrow S(x)] \wedge [I(x) \rightarrow S(x)]$. This is equivalent to: $[L(x) \vee I(x)] \rightarrow S(x)$.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ { Where $I(n) = n$ has intellect, $L(n) = n$ has life, and $S(n) = n$ has soul. This formalization is oversimplified, since intellect and life are not only possessed by something which also happens to possess a soul, but rather the intelligent or living thing's intellect/reason is in its soul and its life is in its soul (249a6). I question whether the sense in which life is "in" a soul can be the same as the sense in which intellect or reason is "in" a soul. My point, however, is only to distinguish the disjunctive reading I favor from a conjunctive reading. }

With the conclusion at 249b5-6, that without motion no one anywhere will have any intelligence about anything, the ties between Intellect and Soul are drawn taut. Where there is no motion there are no souls and thus, perforce, there is no intelligence.

4. *Three Passages in the Timaeus: 30b1-6, 37c, 46d5-6*

As in the *Sophist*, so too in the *Timaeus*, the inherence of intellect claim is first stated in a chain of reasoning which starts from the assumption of the value of Intellect. Specifically, this claim is used to characterize the best possible world that the Demiurge could have made and thus did create, and thence to infer the nature of the model that he used to make such a world. Of things that are sensible (lit. “by nature visible”), all that on the whole possess intelligence are better than all those that on the whole are lacking in intelligence. The Demiurge “reasoned and concluded that among things naturally visible no unintelligent thing could as a whole be better than a work which does possess intelligence as a whole (*Tim.* 30b1-2).” However, the Demiurge cannot simply put intelligence alone into the created world, for “he further concluded that it is impossible for anything to come to possess intelligence apart from soul”. Thus “Guided by this reasoning he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe (30b4-5).”

While it is argued in the *Timaeus* that the world must have earth and fire if it is to be tangible and visible, which it obviously is, it is not explained here why, from the Creator’s perspective, the world should be made to have a sensible body rather than simply being a soul; it is assumed already when the Demiurge is considering things that

are by nature visible.¹²⁰ Yet there is an argument for why the cosmos as a whole must have a soul, and that is that nothing that comes to have intelligence can do so without a soul. In other words, anything *having* intelligence *has* it in a soul. Menn points out that it could still be possible for the Being that *is* Intelligence itself (i.e. the Form of Intelligence rather than a participant in it) to lack a soul; the claim only covers things that *come to have* intelligence (Menn [1995], 19ff). While that is a valid and effective way of disarming the Inherence of Intellect, there is evidence that Plato explicitly denies Intellect *being* (i.e. Intellect as a Form). Furthermore, we will see that there are no clear cases where Plato in fact speaks of Intelligence itself, a Being apart from soul.

In addition to this statement of the inherence claim, there are two other statements amounting to much the same thing. At 37aff *Timaeus* discusses the cognitive operations of the World-soul, i.e. the motions of the orbits of the Same and the Different when encountering divisible, changing (*sensible*) objects and indivisible, eternal (*intelligible*) objects. Encounters with eternal objects yield episteme, and those with changing things yield true opinions (*doxa*). But, lest anyone give a material account of cognition, he then insists that there is no truth in any account that locates these forms of cognition in anything but a soul. (37c3-5)

We saw in chapter 1 that Plato treats *Nous* as a type of knowledge, perhaps the best kind of knowledge, and certainly something on par and of like kind as episteme. Insofar as it is a type of cognition, it too must be in a soul. So the *Timaeus* not only furnishes us with one of our statements that Intelligence must inhere in souls, it also tells us that knowledge, opinion, and any other kind of cognition must be in a soul and nothing

¹²⁰ One can extrapolate from other parts of the speech an explanation for why the world required a body. If, for instance, the “traces” in the receptacle ‘prior’ to arrangement are or include sense qualia, then they would have to be put into order as sensible bodies.

else. This is a more generic inherence claim, which implies the Inherence of Intellect doctrine as a specific case insofar as *nous* is a species of cognition.

Finally, at 46d5-6 by way of explaining that the material “elements” such as air, fire, et al. are incapable of possessing any reason (λόγον) or intelligence (νοῦν), Timaeus reiterates the Inherence of Intellect claim once more. “Of all the things that are, the only one it befits to possess intelligence must be said to be the soul.”¹²¹ Again, Menn would argue that while the soul is the only thing that can possess (κτᾶσθαι) intellect, it may be that something can BE intellect itself without being a soul. Again, this argument is not contradicted by the text, it circumvents the restrictive force of the immanence claim by distinguishing possessing and becoming from being the thing itself. However, this tactic remains unmotivated unless Menn et al. can directly point to an instance of the Form of Intellect or Intellect itself as an intelligible somewhere in Plato.¹²² Furthermore, if it can be shown that Plato explicitly denies that intelligence is an intelligible being, then it will have no place to stand.¹²³

5. *Laws XII 967a7-d1*

At the time of completing this dissertation I discovered another statement of the inherence of intellect principle in the *Laws*, which, to my knowledge, has not been cited to this affect before. It is a stronger, clearer, and unambiguous statement of the principle than the passage at 961d1-11 discussed immediately below. It is to be found at L. XII 967a7-b4. In subsequent treatments of this issue I will expand my discussion. Here I can only provide a very brief account. The general context of this passage is the concluding

¹²¹ “τῶν γὰρ ὄντων ὃ νοῦν μόνῳ κτᾶσθαι προσήκει, λεκτέον ψυχὴν.”

¹²² Some take the *Sophist* passage above to provide evidence of Intellect as a Form or as belonging to the Forms. I argue against this interpretation of the text in the next chapter.

¹²³ There is a denial of intelligence being the same as the intelligibles in *Epistle VII* (342c7-d5). See Below.

discussion of the requisite education of Magnesia's rulers. They must study theology and learn all the proofs for the existence of the gods, including the argument from heavenly order to intelligent rule and design (966e-967a), and the argument of the priority that the soul has to the body, i.e. the first theological argument of *Laws* X. The statement of the inherence principle occurs here during a recapitulation of the latter argument and specifically its point that the failure to understand the nature of the soul is what misled corporealistic natural philosophers towards atheism.

The criticism of older, corporealistic cosmologists is that they should not have chosen inanimate bodies lacking in soul as their principles, for this guarantees that intellect (*nous*) could not rule the cosmos, and even they in some sense suspected this (967a7-b4). Some of them even dared to say that *nous* is cosmically sovereign (e.g. Anaxagoras), but still erred by choosing lifeless/soulless bodies to order the universe with (967b4-c5). This led to accusations of atheism against them and much hostility, especially from poets (967c5-d1).

This first part, 967a7-b4, is the most relevant for the inherence of intellect principle. Here is the key passage, as translated by Bury (the bracketed text and emphasis is mine):

“The position [we have] at present is, as I said, exactly the opposite of what it was when those who considered these objects considered them to be soulless (*apsucha* - ἄψυχα). Yet even then they were objects of admiration, and the conviction which is now actually held [by us] was suspected by all who studied them accurately – *namely that if they were soulless (apsucha), and consequently devoid of reason (νοῦν), they could never have employed with such precision calculations so marvelous;*”¹²⁴

6. Other passages: *Laws* 961d1-11; *Epistle VII* 342c4-e3

¹²⁴ The text of the italicized portion reads: “ὅπως μήποτ’ ἂν ἄψυχα ὄντα οὕτως εἰς ἀκρίβειαν θαυμαστοῖς λογισμοῖς ἂν ἐχρήτο, νοῦν μὴ κεκτημένα.” (967b2-4).

There are two other texts in late works that bear on the Inherence of Intellect claim. One is weaker evidence for the inherence thesis, and the other is strong evidence but is in a more controversial work. The former is in book XII of *Laws* and the latter is in *Epistle VII*. The occurrence in *Epistle VII* seems to be recapitulating the statement of the principle of inherence and its associated argument from the *Euthydemus*.

6a. *A weak statement in Laws 961d1-11*

In Book XII of the *Laws* there is a statement that is weaker than those above, including the clear statement at *Laws* XII 967a7-b4, but which is still pertinent. There, the Athenian discusses the excellences of the parts of a living creature that are most responsible for its survival, i.e. “are its savior” for the work (ἔργον) of living (961d2ff). The greatest saviors (σωτῆρα) of the living creature are, by nature, its soul and its head. Whereas a thing’s ability to do its work well is its excellence (ἀρετή), “the excellence of these two things, [the soul and the head], furnishes every living creature with [its] salvation (961d5)”. Clinias asks in what way excellence affords this, and the Athenian answers that it is “By intellect (νοῦς), among other things, being engendered in/for the soul, and by sight and hearing, among other things, being in/for the head (961d7-8).” Intellect and sight and hearing are listed because they are the preeminent excellences of their respective parts as indicated by the Athenian’s next sentence: “The combination, when intellect is mixed with the best senses, and they become one, is most justly called the savior of each [living creature] (961d8-10).”¹²⁵

This is not a full statement of the Inherence of Intellect thesis because it does not say that intellect only comes about in a soul and not elsewhere. However, it does use the

¹²⁵ An intriguing question: could this be the same mixture or the state corresponding to the life of reason mixed with the pure pleasures in the *Philebus*, i.e. winner of the title of best life? For reason mixed with senses cf. *R.* VIII 546b1-2.

term ἐγγιγνόμενος to describe the relation of intellect to soul, so it is presenting intellect, at least in this case, as inhering in the soul. Moreover, it identifies intellect as a virtue of the soul.

6b. A strong statement in *Epistle VII* 342c4-e3

In *Epistle VII*, however, there is a strong assertion that νοῦς and other kinds of knowledge are found only in souls. Furthermore, the identification of these forms of knowledge with the intelligible object of knowledge is explicitly denied – a thesis that we will have to return in the next chapter when we argue that the Demiurge, insofar as he is intelligible, is not also intellect. The author distinguishes five aspects of an object of knowledge, for example the circle. The first is its name, “circle”. The second is its λόγος, understood as the proposition made of words that state its definition, e.g. “the figure whose extremities are everywhere equidistant from its center.” The third is any drawn out circle, e.g. this diagram of a circle, which is destructible (unlike the circle itself). The fourth is the cognition of the circle that resides in the soul, and it is here that the author invokes the Inherence of Intellect.

“The fourth is knowledge, intellect (νοῦς), and true opinion. All of this one must be placed not in utterances, nor in the shapes of bodies, but as residing in souls; [so] being clearly different from the nature of the circle itself and the three spoken of earlier. Of these [in the fourth], intellect draws nearest to the fifth, being closest in kinship and likeness, and the others being much farther away (342c4-d3).”¹²⁶

¹²⁶ “τέταρτον δὲ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νοῦς ἀληθὴς τε δόξα περὶ ταῦτ’ ἐστίν· ὥς δὲ ἐν τούτῳ αὐτὸ πᾶν θετέον οὐκ ἐν φωναῖς οὐδ’ ἐν σωματικῶν σχήμασιν ἀλλ’ ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐνόν, ᾧ δῆλον ἕτερον τε ὄν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κύκλου τῆς φύσεως τῶν τε ἔμπροσθεν λεχθέντων τριῶν. τούτων δὲ ἐγγύτατα μὲν συγγενεῖα καὶ ὁμοιότητι τοῦ πέμπτου νοῦς πεπλησίακεν, τὰλλα δὲ πλεον ἀπέχει.”

Whereas these are in the soul, they are not words or sounds (φωναί) nor bodies or their shapes. From this it clearly follows that intellect and the others of its kind are distinct from the third, which is corporeal.¹²⁷

It is “clear” that this distinguishes the fourth from the fifth as well only because it is assumed that that which is in the soul is not the Forms themselves - but more on this and intellect’s kinship to the intelligibles later. We recognize for the present purpose that the Inherence of Intellect (and other forms of knowledge) is assumed in order to show the distinction (an ontological one) between this aspect of knowing something and the others.

7. *Philebus* 30c9-10

I have reserved for last the incidence of the **Inherence** principle in the *Philebus*, since it follows almost immediately upon the heels of 30a9-b7, a passage that has been a “smoking gun” for the defenders of a transcendent Intellect in Plato. The *Philebus*’ statement of the **Inherence** principle is very direct. At the point that it occurs in the dialogue’s “cosmological passage” Intelligence has been recognized to be the source of order in the cosmos (30c2-7), and the world soul has been shown to furnish us with our souls and to rule over the body of the whole cosmos (30a5-b7). The inherence claim, formulated as, “But wisdom and intelligence could never come to be without soul” connects these two thoughts together into one cosmological picture: Intelligence, in the world soul, rules over, moves, and orders the cosmos just as our souls in our bodies do (30c9-10).

¹²⁷ What about the fourth’s differences from the first two classes, which are verbal? It is only “clear” that residing in souls distinguishes them from utterances (i.e. names and accounts), if it is clear that utterances are not in the soul. Since Plato defines thought as silent speech (literally speech without utterance/sound”: *dialogos aneu phōnēs* – διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς) this exclusion of utterance from the soul might seem hasty (*Soph.* 263e3-5). Here, however, I would suggest that the *Euthydemus* argument is required context. The point is not that knowledge and thought are formulated without use of language, it is that words and sounds are not alive, so they do not possess souls. Merely having certain words does not give one knowledge.

§III. No Transcendent Intellect in the *Philebus*: Intellect does not furnish soul

1. *The Role of the discussion of Intellect in the *Philebus**

Rejecting the basic spirit of the Inherence of Intellect principle, there is a contrary interpretive position, that Νοῦς is for Plato something at times distinct from the soul, insofar as there exists a Form of Intellect (or, in the case of the Neo-Platonists, that Intellects and Intelligibles were identical). This view at present is gaining growing support. The reason adduced for this Noöntic Transcendentalist interpretation is essentially that the Demiurge is intelligible but also is intellect. But if the Inherence principle is strictly and true without exception, then this reasoning is question begging in favor of the ΔN thesis. Given the weight of evidence for *prima facie* rejecting a non-inherent and thus non-immanent intellect, which a transcendent intelligible intellect would be, transcendentalists ought to offer some clear and positive evidence of an intelligible intellect in Plato's writing.

Among the prominent 20th century noetic-transcendentalist interpretations have been those advocated by Hackforth and more recently Menn. Both look to the cosmological passage in the *Philebus* (roughly 28c6-31a10) to support their claim. They specifically argue that two kinds of intellect must be seen as under discussion there. There is immanent nous, which is always in a soul, but there also is a transcendent nous at 30a9-b7 responsible for furnishing us with souls, so that it must be prior to souls and exempt from the Immanence principle stated at 30c-9. To evaluate their reading, we will look at the cosmological passage and its role within the *Philebus*' ethical arguments. A close reading of the text will show that νοῦς is not posited as something distinct from the World-soul.

The *Philebus* is a late ethical dialogue; the only late dialogue in which Socrates is the main speaker. It is a discussion of what the *human* good is (rather than the good itself). Socrates begins by defending the view that knowledge is the good and the young Philebus claims that it is pleasure. They refer to their respective candidates as their “goddesses”. Thus the dialogue picks up on a question about the more mundane human good raised by Adeimantus during Socrates’ discussion of the Form of the Good in *Republic* VI: “But you yourself, Socrates, do you say the good is knowledge or pleasure, or is it something else altogether (*R.* 506b)?” The *Philebus* reaches the conclusion that neither pleasure nor knowledge alone suffices to make a human life good. A well-measured mixture is best, but knowledge is more responsible for the proper ordering of such a mix than pleasure is. A great deal of the dialogue is spent in the dialectical process of collecting and dividing different categories of pleasures to determine which are good and which are bad, which are false and which true.

How do *nous* and soul fit into the *Philebus*? One way Plato frequently uses the term “νοῦς” (*nous*) is to denote an extremely high form of knowledge or cognition, on par with or superior to the other highest knowledge terms with which he commonly associates it: *epistēmē* - ἐπιστήμη, *phronēsis* - φρόνησις, and *sophia* - σοφία in the *Philebus*¹²⁸, *technē* τεχνή and *philosophia* - φιλοσοφία elsewhere. So “νοῦς” (*nous*) can be used honorifically and generically as some very worthy kind of knowledge.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Key terms bundled together or treated equivalently with νοῦς in the *Philebus*: ἐπιστήμη: 21d10, 28a4, 28c3, 55c5, 60d4; φρόνησις: 21d9, 22a3, 27c5, 27d2, 28a4, 28d8, (60b4, 60c8, 60d4, 60e), 63b4, 63c5; σοφία: 30b4, 30c6, 30c9.

¹²⁹ So also in *Republic* VI where νοῦς, ἐπιστήμη, and γιγνωσκόμενοι interchange with one another as the term used for the kind of the knowledge at the top of the divided line and which the Form of the Good is the cause of, just as the sun is the cause of visual perception. 508c-509c, 511d.

The association of *nous* with *epistēmē*, *phronēsis*, and *sophia* in the *Philebus* is this: these are what one seeks in the kind of life Socrates is endorsing. And, in fact, at 28b1 when Socrates changes to a more cosmological sense of “*voûς*” in order to assign it to one of the four kinds, Protarchus, the third companion and Socrates’ main interlocutor, complains that he is begging the question in favor of his own goddess, knowledge. Because it has such strong metaphysical associations, we should emphasize this primarily epistemic and ontologically less substantial sense of “*voûς*” – that is *voûς* as comprehension or understanding. This sense will provide our orientation as we try to make sense of how *voûς* relates to the World-soul in the *Philebus*’ cosmological passages.

Since the lives of unmixed pleasure and unmixed knowledge are both denied first place (21a-e), and a mixed life is recognized as preferable (22a), the competition for second place begins. This will go to whichever of the two goddesses is more like and is more responsible for the goodness of a good mixed life. To do so four ontological categories are laid out in 23c-27c. Through this four-fold scheme Socrates hopes to gain traction on which deserves second place.

2. *Categorizing the Goddesses in the Four-fold Ontology*

In order to begin to make sense of the third candidate for the good, the mixture of pleasure and knowledge, Socrates introduces a fourfold division of everything in the universe (23c). A god has revealed to Socrates the distinction between limits and the unlimited, and there will be a mixture of these and a cause of that mixture. The unlimited is identified with plurality. Socrates furnishes the example of hotter and colder¹³⁰. These

¹³⁰ Dorothea Frede notes that examples of the Unlimited are not restricted to “relative” terms like hotter and colder, e.g. ‘high’ and ‘low’, ‘fast’ and ‘slow’, ‘frost’ and ‘heat’ at 26a. (19 n.3) However, this misses the

are relative terms and they vary in the more and the less (24a-b, 25a). Such variation is presented as the alternative to having limit, “Check first in the case of the hotter and the colder whether you can conceive of a limit, or whether the ‘more and less’ do not rather reside in these kinds, and while they reside in them do permit the attainment of any end. For once an end has been reached, they will both have ended as well (24a-b).”

I propose that by ‘having an end’ Plato means having a definite quantity and thus not being a relative property. Plato considers another example of varying in the more and less, ‘strongly’ and ‘gently’. “Whenever they apply, they prevent everything from adopting a definite quantity; by imposing on all actions the qualification ‘stronger’ relative to ‘gentler’ or the reverse, they procure a ‘more and less’ while doing away with all definite quantity (24c).” Similarly, their use will be indefinite insofar as by themselves (without limit) they have no beginning, middle, or end (31a).

Perhaps the most important description of the unlimited that Plato gives is that it is always in flux.

“We are saying now, in effect, that if they [things that are unlimited like hotter and colder] do not abolish definite quantity, but let quantity and measurement take a foothold in the domain of the more and the less, the strong and the mild, they will be driven out of their own territory. For once they take on a definite quantity, they would no longer be hotter and colder. The hotter and equally the colder are always in flux and never remain, while definite quantity means standstill and the end of all progression. The upshot of this argument is that the hotter, together with its opposite, turn out to be unlimited (24c-d).”

point of the unlimited. While those terms such as ‘slow’ and ‘fast’ are not *comparative*, whether and when they are ascribed will be *relative*. I am fast as compared to a snail, but slow as compared to a hawk. Plato is of course aware of this phenomenon, and Protarchus has always mentioned it in the context of the one and the many, “...[I] who am one and the same, as tall and short, heavy and light...” (14d). Thus all of these terms are relative in the important sense in which what has limited is not. I may be *tall* as compared to a child or *shorter* than a giant, but I am exactly 5’9” – that is not a relative predication of me. (It might be relevant that I might be precisely 5’8.8234...” and measurements can be imprecise, but that is not a problem he dealing with here, since he is speaking of ideal mathematical limits like “double”. For the relevance of mathematical precision to his metaphysics cf. *Rep.* 529c-530b).

All the things that vary in the more and less will be species of the genus ‘unlimited’ (24e-25a). The best description of what the Unlimited refers to is ‘qualities’ or apparent qualities that are chaotic. They might indirectly refer to particulars, insofar as Plato conceives them as no more than fluctuating qualities that lack stable being.¹³¹

Just as the unlimited has all things which vary in the more and the less within it, the genus of limit has within it those things which most clearly do not vary in the more and the less, precise numbers and ratios, such as the equal, the double, and “all that is related as number to number or measure to measure (25a-b).” Limit can also be described by its role in the mixture, it “puts an end to the conflicts there are among opposites, making them commensurate and harmonious by imposing a definite number on them (25d-e).” We can summarize by saying that limit is an exact number or proportion that can be imposed upon the unlimited to make it balanced. So it seems it would either be shape or mathematical structure directly imposed on qualitative appearance.

What then is the Mixture? The mixture is produced when numerical order is placed within the Unlimited (25c-d). The result is that there is a harmony. Examples of this are balancing opposites in a body to produce health, the high and low and the fast and slow to create music, and cold and hot to create temperate weather. Most importantly, by using law to put measure on our limitless pleasures that lead to wickedness, we can

¹³¹ This view and my understanding of Limit cut across or take elements from the three main interpretations of Limit/Unlimited as J.C.B. Gosling presents them in his commentary to the *Philebus*. (Gosling 156ff). Specifically, I do think the Unlimited is meant to refer both to particulars under universals (suggested in 14c-17d), the many of a one in its relation to that one (similarly 14c-17d) and a range of phenomenal qualities that are indefinite, imprecise, or mercurial. Limit, strictly speaking seems to me to be more like mathematical ration (as per Gosling’s Interpretation) than the Forms, but it also seems that Plato thinks intermediate Forms between particulars and a broader Form (i.e. species between substance and genus) has a something somehow analogous to these mathematical ratios. I have no suggestion, here, how to resolve those two senses, and will focus on the former.

achieve salvation from them (26b-c).¹³² And since these harmonies are *produced* as the “joint offspring” of Limit and the Unlimited, they are a coming-into-being (26d). Yet all these mixtures are good things, so perhaps not all of *becoming* will be identifiable with them, at least insofar as some *coming-to-be*, the kind before creation or that which is made imperfect by the necessity of the *straying cause*, is bad.

Immediately after identifying the Mixture of Limit and the Unlimited as a coming-to-be, Plato states that there is no becoming without a cause (26e). He identifies *causing* with *making* here and thus *cause* with *maker* as well (26e-27a). The cause of coming-to-be will not be the same as what it produces since it must be before the coming-to-be, and thus they are different (27a). This maker is specifically referred to as a craftsman (δημιουργός – *dēmiourgos*) (27b). Identified with Intellect, the Maker is said to be the king over the heavens and earth, for its ruling intelligence is responsible for all the order in nature, (the alternative to this being that the world would be ruled by chance, the noxious position Plato identifies with the natural scientists) (28e). This Intellect cannot exist without a soul (30c9-10), and the reason that human beings possess is analogous to this intellect just as our body is a smaller part of the body of the world (29d-30b). Thus the cause of the Mixture is best exemplified by a divine soul who puts rules the world with intellect, causes it to be orderly, and who is the distributor of human intellect.

Pleasures and pains are very quickly shown to belong to the kind of the unlimited at 27e1-28a4. The much longer argument that follows is the “cosmological passage”,

¹³² This echoes the passage from the *Protagoras* where measurement is our *salvation* from the dangers of trying to make decisions on the basis of short term pleasures (*Prt.* 356dff). We might even relate this notion of harmony restraining excess to the account of virtue as harmony of the parts of the soul in the *Republic*. At any rate, the idea of measure as the solution to excess present here in the *Philebus* is not one lacking precedent in Plato’s other works. Cf. *Soph.* 253bff as well.

where it will be argued that Reason (φρόνησις), Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), and Intelligence (νοῦς) belong to the fourth kind – that of causes responsible for mixtures of the unlimited with limits (28a3-5).

Among those three terms, “νοῦς” *nous* quickly becomes dominant, both because of the pun on Νοῦς / Ζεὺς βασιλεύς (King *Nous* / King Zeus) (30d), but also because it probably would seem the least out of place in a discussion of cosmic ἀρχαί or principles. “Νοῦς” was a term that was familiar in such cosmological roles from at least as far back as Xenophanes and featured very prominently in Anaxagoras and his followers such as Archelaus. It also has such associations in earlier dialogues of Plato. It is familiar even to us, unfortunately, to hear the claim that the universe is ordered or run *intelligently* or by (an) *Intelligence*. Yet it would be quite odd to hear that Science or even Knowledge directed the world. Again, given the point of the broader debate between Socrates and Philebus, we should understand the goal of this argument to be the categorization of νοῦς *nous* as well as ἐπιστήμη *epistēmē* or φρόνησις *phronēsis*. But to make the case that νοῦς is (a) cause, Socrates will want to show it first on a grand scale by arguing that there is a World-soul guiding the cosmos with its intellect.

Why? Why can’t νοῦς just be shown to run things? After all, it is claimed to be a cause at the end of this argument. Just before the argument proper we are said to have *nous* as our king of heaven and earth (νοῦς ἐστι βασιλεὺς ἡμῖν οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς) (28c7-8), and at the very outset of the argument we learn that intelligence (νοῦς) or some wonderful arranging reason (φρόνησιν τινα θαυμαστήν συντάπτουσάν) rules the universe (τὰ σύμπαντα) *rather than chance* (28d8-9).

From those two passages we know that Socrates and Protarchus are saying that intelligence is responsible in an authoritative way for what happens in the cosmos, and that it arranges and gives order to a world that, without it, would be left in whatever state chance disposed it. However, at this point we do not yet know how reified an understanding of “Intelligence” we are meant to have. Another way to put that is that we do not yet have Plato’s answer to the implementation problem. Nous could be an unmixed substance, an aspect of bodies, or a quality of an agent who literally is, like Zeus, king of the world. We will come to learn that there can be no νοῦς without ψυχή at 30c9-10. If that is so, then νοῦς is a cognitive excellence of some sort that inheres in souls or is possessed by them. In addition to this being a solution to the implementation problem on the cosmic scale, it also does double duty for the Socrates’ argument with Philebus by helping to point out, by analogy, the kind of role that nous would have in the lives of individuals on the microcosmic scale.

3. Structure of the Argument in the Cosmological Passage

Let’s now turn to the argument of the “cosmological passage” at 28c6-31a10. To begin with, let’s consider its basic argumentative structure:

- A. Grant that the universe is ruled by order and intelligence rather than disorder and chance [28d5-e6].
- B. Strengthen this position against possible arguments by showing that there is a cosmological or ontological structure that allows for intelligence to rule the cosmos. i.e. the World-soul [29a6-30d8].
- C. Conclude that intelligence belongs to the kind of cause, since the intelligent World-soul is responsible for all the order in the cosmos [30d10-e3].

Now, most of the argument of the cosmological passage is part of step B, which can be further broken down into the following stages:

1. Argue that the elements of our bodies are furnished by the elements of the entire cosmos of which they are a small portion. [29a9-d5]
2. Infer that the elements of the cosmos as a whole also constitute a body against which our bodies stand in part-to-whole and dependent-to-provider relationships. [29d7-e9]
3. Recognize that our bodies have souls. [30a3-4]
4. Infer by analogy that our souls could only come from a greater soul, i.e. the soul of the whole world's body, i.e. the World-soul. [30a5-8]
5. Infer that from the facts that the World-soul maintains us and gives soul to us and that the body of the cosmos is greater and more beautiful than our own, that this soul must maintain the body of the world at large. [30a9-b7]
6. So grant that there must be a cause of this order that can be called Intelligence or Reason. [30c2-7]
7. But recognize that Intelligence can only be in that soul. [30c9-10]
8. Surmise that order in the cosmos comes from the intelligence of the World-soul, i.e. from an intelligent World-soul. [30d1-4]
9. (Understand that we have thus defended the position that Intelligence is the ruler of the cosmos) –[30d6-8]

Steps 1-4 constitute a Socratic theological argument that is extremely similar to one also found in Xenophon, and which persisted into early Stoicism.¹³³ We can leave this first part of the argument aside after making only a few points, for it is from steps 5-9 that we will have to arrive at an understanding of the relationship between *voûs* and the World-soul and whether there is a transcendent *nous* separate from soul here, or only an immanent one.

4. *The Analogical Microcosm-Macrocosm Inference to a World-soul*

The existence of a soul of the world is argued for by analogy from the relationship between our bodies and their constitutive elements and the body of the world and its constitutive elements. That relationship of the microcosmic body to the macrocosmic body fleshed out in the first steps of B, has three key features that, by extension, will be concluded to be the relationship between human souls and the World-soul:

- i. Our elements/bodies are *generated from, nourished with, and ruled by* the corresponding elements/body of the cosmos; they do not generate or nourish it.
- ii. The body of the universe has the same attributes as ours.
- iii. However, the elements of the cosmos are far purer, larger, stronger, etc. than ours, and the world's body has the same kinds of features that ours have, but those which it has are all more beautiful.

The inference that establishes the existence of a World-soul corresponding to the World-body is drawn at 30a3-8, although it is explained in the crucial and controversial lines that follow at 30a9-b7. Let's start with the inference. It is granted that our bodies have souls, but if our bodies come from nowhere else than from the body of the cosmos, which

¹³³ In Xenophon's case it is not from soul to World-soul, but from our mind (*nous*) to an unspecific but presumably cosmic *nous*. *Memorabilia* I.iv.8. Cf. Viano [2001]; Sedley [2005], [2007].

is far superior to ours in all respects, then our souls must come from the soul that the body of the world has, for our bodies would not have souls to care for them if the world, with its vastly bigger and better body did not also have a soul.

A conception of the parts of the cosmos, specifically our bodies, as *microcosms* like (but inferior to) their macrocosmic source is obviously at work here. It is tricky to determine with precision how the inference should be parsed. We might try to understand this as a case of the fallacy of composition – if our bodies have souls and they are merely parts of the world’s body, then the world must also have a soul of which our souls are smaller parts. However that strikes me as subtly missing the sense of 30a5-7. “Whence, dear Protarchus, does [the body] get [the soul], unless the body of the universe just happens to be ensouled, in fact having the same things [as ours] yet <in all respects> finer.”¹³⁴

If we ask ‘why couldn’t the human body have the soul even though the World-body lacked one?’ or ‘why couldn’t the human soul come from somewhere besides the soul of the World-body?’, then the final clause would afford an answer. The World-body has everything that the human body has, but better, and it is that from which the human body gets whatever qualities it has. Thus if the human body has a soul which nourishes and sustains it, then the superior body of the cosmos, which also has a soul, most likely derives its nourishment and sustenance from its own superior soul.

The premise operative here is (iii) above, viz. that whatever our bodies “have” they get from the World-body, which has those things, but better. Therefore, since our bodies have souls, the World-body must have a soul, which is far better than ours, but

¹³⁴ “Πόθεν, ὦ φίλε Πρωταρχε, λαβόν, εἴπερ μὴ τό γε τοῦ παντὸς σῶμα ἐμψυχον ὃν ἐτύγγανε, ταῦτά γε ἔχον τούτῳ καὶ ἔτι πάντῃ καλλίονα;” Manuscripts B and T omit “πάντῃ”, and without it I think the final clause is a little clearer, but on either reading the sense is the same.

that is not to say that our souls are parts of the World-soul, even though our bodies are parts of the world body.¹³⁵

5. A Much Misread Passage in the *Philebus*

Now comes the difficult passage, of 30a9-b7, which is taken to show that there is some kind of transcendent nous that must stand prior to soul. On its own it might be ambiguous. I think our gloss of it must be set by our understanding of the argument preceding it, viz. the macrocosm-microcosm argument that had established that the world soul exists and is the source of our souls in Socrates' immediately preceding sentence.

The text then says:

ΣΩ: “Οὐ γάρ που δοκοῦμεν γε, ὦ Πρώταρχε, τὰ τέτταρα ἐκεῖνα, πέρας καὶ ἄπειρον καὶ κοινὸν καὶ τὸ τῆς αἰτίας γένος ἐν ἅπασιν τέταρτον ἐνόν, τοῦτο ἐν μὲν τοῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν ψυχὴν τε παρῆχον καὶ σωμασκήαν ἐμποιοῦν καὶ παῖσαντος σώματος ἰατρικὴν καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἄλλα συντιθέν καὶ ἀκούμενον πᾶσαν καὶ παντοίαν σοφίαν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι, τῶν δ’ αὐτῶν τούτων ὄντων ἐν ὅλῳ τε οὐρανῷ καὶ κατὰ μεγάλα μέρη, καὶ προσέτι καλῶν καὶ εἰλικρινῶν, ἐν τούτοις δ’ οὐκ ἄρα μεμηχανῆσθαι τὴν τῶν καλλίστων καὶ τιμωτάτων φύσιν.”

ΠΡΩ: “Ἄλλ οὐδαμῶς τοῦτό γ’ ἂν λόγον ἔχοι.”

SO: “With respect to those four, limit and unlimited and mixture and the fourth class of cause present in everything, we don’t really believe this, Protarchus, that while [it] furnishes the soul for us in these [bodies] and engenders fitness and curing of (one’s) body’s faults, and in other (bodies) by ordering and mending them gets called all-encompassing wisdom; yet of the very same things in the whole heavens, on a large scale –of things, furthermore, that are beautiful and pure- that in *these* it does not devise the nature of the most beautiful and glorious things?!”

PRO: “It can’t be that way at all.”

¹³⁵ This fits nicely with the account in the *Timaeus*. In the *Timaeus* all immortal souls are created by the Demiurge. While he creates the souls and bodies of the immanent gods (the cosmos, the planets, etc.) he only makes the indestructible intellects or immortal parts of mortal creatures’ souls. The mortal parts of their souls and their bodies are left to the lesser gods to create. The Demiurge “seeds” these souls into the planets. The World-soul and other created gods are responsible for using *shares* of the world’s total store of the four elements to make their bodies, and they see to it that the immortal souls find their way into these bodies. So this would agree with the idea that our mortal bodies’ elements come to us as shares of the whole World-body’s four elements, and that the World-soul sees to it that our bodies are furnished with our souls, both the mortal parts which the World-soul creates, and the immortal parts which the Demiurge creates, but which it places into mortal bodies. *Timaeus* 41b-43a.

This passage takes for granted that the World-soul (the unnamed subject in the indirect statement) is responsible for giving our bodies their souls and for maintaining them, and, assuming so, it rejects the possibility that the World-soul is then not responsible for the corresponding body of the heavens. That would be especially implausible because the body of the heavens is so vastly superior to our own; how should it be so without a soul, when our own bodies require a soul to keep them alive and intact? And if the cosmos has a soul that helps to care for us, wouldn't this soul also care for the cosmos as a whole, a thing far greater and more important than us individually (Cp. *Laws* X 903b-d)? In other words, what is argued for here is that the World-soul is responsible for the care of the entire cosmos. It truly is a **World**-soul.¹³⁶

We come to point 6. Now, I have been saying that the unnamed subject of 30a9-b7 is the World-soul, and it is clear from 30a5-7 that a World-soul has been posited (“unless the body of the universe...happens to possess a soul”), but this is also meant to be a discussion that clarifies the nature of intellect, so we must look ahead to see how they are actually put together. Once we have granted that there is this *thing* responsible for ordering everything in the physical cosmos we apply the fourfold ontology and recognize that harmonious order in things-that –come-to-be is the combination of unlimited with limit brought about by some cause. This cause, since it orders and coordinates the cycles of celestial phenomena (years, seasons, months), that is it orders those things that in the created world display that greatest and most beautiful invariant order, is “most justly called σοφία and νοῦς”. That it is most justly called these given

¹³⁶ This point is more significant than it might initially seem. For instance, it is a serious matter for Xenophon, and it seems to have been key for the early Socratics establishing that the gods can and will hold human beings responsible for all their actions; god is in charge of the whole world and sees all that transpires within it.

epithets suggests that they are honorific. The thought seems to be this: what better deserves to be called intelligence than the intelligent order found in living beings and celestial cycles or their intelligent designer?

If we understand the existence of the World-soul and its basic relationship to individual souls to have been established at 30a5-7, as well we should, then we can identify the challenging sentence that follows at 30a9-b7 as a further inference about the characteristics of the intelligent World-soul, specifically its role in the cosmos as a whole, considered as a body. Thus we learn more about how the World-soul is to be understood, and hopefully it will lay to rest the worries and confusions that “ἐν μὲν τοῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν ψυχὴν τε παρέχον” has occasioned.

That worry was this: if the subject of the sentence is “intellect”, then we have intellect furnishing (παρέχον – *parechon*) a soul. The line “ἐν μὲν τοῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν ψυχὴν τε παρέχον” (“it furnishes the soul for us in these [bodies]”) does confound us if we understand its subject to be “nous”. This seems impossible if intelligence requires a soul, as the text states only a few sentences later at 30c9-10. However, many interpreters (and not only transcendentalists) have misconstrued it as saying that Intellect furnishes soul. As a result scholars have either called foul on the text or else drawn the wrong ontological conclusions, namely that there is a kind of Intellect distinct from and prior to soul. Dorothea Frede in her translation and commentary suggests that we cannot make sense of the line with “παρέχον”; she tentatively proposes reading κατέχον instead. Gosling stands for excising it or else giving it a very weak and (to my mind) bizarre meaning.

Then again, while some editors want to amend the text and change “παρέχον” (furnishes), defenders of transcendent Intellect are only too happy to let it stand, even though they continue to understand the subject as Intellect. This permits Hackforth and Menn to say that there is a kind of intellect that is inherent in souls, but there also must a higher kind that is responsible for yielding up souls, just as the Demiurge creates soul in the *Timaeus*.

This textual worry rests on a misreading of the argument. The passage reasons that if we think that the World-soul is responsible for giving souls to our bodies and for the upkeep and well being of our bodies, then we cannot but also think that it does likewise on the cosmic level, especially since the physical cosmos is far more beautiful and well-ordered than we are. Intellect is not being discussed here; the World-soul is furnishing souls to individual bodies.

But we have adequately shown that the meaning of the passage is that, whereas the *World-soul* helps to care for our bodies (and our souls for our bodies) it is senseless to conclude that it does not care and provide for the body of the cosmos, which is far superior in every respect to our own small selves. That would both be inexplicable given the macrocosm-microcosm parallels already established, but it would also leave the beauty of the heavens entirely to chance, which is silly to conclude *if* one has a World-soul already on the table just waiting to be used to explain said order. If the significance of the line with παρέχον had been that *Intelligence* furnishes soul, then this really would be in conflict with the dependence relationship that we find here between intelligence and soul. However, it is not intelligence that furnishes our souls, it is an intelligent World-soul that does so. We can take παρέχον at face value and still retain the dependency

point a few lines later without any conflict. This means though, that there is no reason to see any reference to a transcendent form of Intellect here.

Correcting that misinterpretation is the final part of my defense of the Inherence claim and it lays the ground for my critique of the identification of the Demiurge with *Nous* or with the World-soul in the following chapter. 30c9-10 is making its ontological point about inherence, and it is doing so without paradox: σοφία and νοῦς, (which are kinds of knowledge) are states of soul – they are either the excellent cognitions that some being has or else they are the faculties or states of having those cognitions. We have a substance/affect relationship of metaphysical dependence. Thus if we can say that the cosmos has intelligence we must suppose it to have a soul.

To conclude, then, the evidence for the **Inherence** principle is ample, while the putative evidence for transcendent *nous* shows no such thing. In the next chapter, however, we will use the **Inherence** principle to help settle questions about the identity of the Demiurge and to reject the **Demiurge is *Nous*** thesis.

Chapter 5: A Refutation of the Thesis that the Demiurge is Intellect (ΔN)

We will start by canvassing these predominant views (§I) and showing how they are undermined by their commitment to the ΔN thesis. Then in §II we will discuss the arguments that been made in support of the ΔN thesis. In §III we will reexamine the textual evidence that has been adduced in support thesis. All but one of the texts that have been brought forward in favor of this view will be shown not demonstrate it nor in some cases to even refer to the Demiurge. However, one passage, *Timaeus* 47e5-48a5, does seem to refer to the Demiurge with the term ‘*nous*’. I will argue that while it does refer to the Demiurge by means of the word ‘*nous*’, it is not a clear case of actually identifying the Demiurge with *nous*. For the sake of argument, though, I will grant it as evidence for ΔN , but I will prove that in spite of it, the texts do not support the ΔN thesis. That one piece of evidence is swamped by evidence to the contrary both within the *Timaeus* and in other works. We then proceed with a series of arguments as to why the Demiurge can be identified with neither intellect (§IV) nor soul (§V). Having shown that despite *Timaeus* 47e5-48a5 the texts do not support the “**Demiurge is *Nous***” (ΔN) thesis, we will conclude our polemical account. This will open the way for the positive account of the Demiurge as a representation of the Form of the Good in chapter 6, since the ΔN thesis has been the main reason that scholars have rejected the view that Demiurge is the Form of the Good.

§I. The Major Interpretations of the Demiurge and their troubles with the ΔN thesis

1. *Categorizing the views*

At the most basic level, there are interpretations of Platonic theology that only posit gods who are immanent to the world of becoming, and then there are those that

recognize in Plato's thought a commitment to some metaphysically transcendent god(s)/hypostasis. The former interpretations can be called 'Immanentist' without qualification or *simpliciter*. Likewise, the latter can be called 'Transcendentalist' *simpliciter*. My own view falls in the latter camp, conceived most broadly.

As I discussed in the introduction, I discriminate the three dominant, modern types of interpretations of the Demiurge in terms of their respective commitments to three claims about Intellect, the Demiurge, and the World-soul that seem to be jointly incompatible. These were:

1. For Plato intellect (νοῦς) always is immanent in a soul. (Inherence of Intellect)
2. The *Timaeus* shows us that the World-soul and the Demiurge are separate, in as much as the Demiurge creates the World-soul. (Distinctness of Demiurge and Soul)
3. The World-soul is the eldest or most prior of all things that come-to-be, thus there is no other soul before it. (Venerability of the World-soul)

Using this schematization, the three main interpretive camps are distinguished thusly:

- α. Those who identify the Demiurge with a transcendent, superanimate intellect, and thus accept 2 and 3 but reject 1. It is the view of Hackforth, Mohr, Menn, Perl, Zeyl, Karfik, et al. It was also the view of ancient middle Platonists and Neo-Platonists, e.g. Albinus, Plotinus, Proclus (though they placed the One/Good above this Intellect).
- β. Those who maintain 1 and 3, but reject 2. They identify the Demiurge with either:
 - (β1) the intellect of all rational souls (Cherniss, Dillon);
 - (β2) the intellect of just the World-soul (Theiler, Frutiger, Festugière);
 - (β3) with the World-soul itself (Cornford, Skemp, Carone).

All tend to favor 'non-literal' readings of the *Timaeus*.

γ. Those who identify the Demiurge as a soul distinct from and prior to the World-soul, i.e. an “Ur-Soul”. They accept 1 and 2 but reject 3. They include Taylor, Vlastos, Robinson, and Mason. They tend to prefer more ‘literal’ readings of the *Timaeus*.

1b. *Transcendentalists v. Immanentists*

I went on to distinguish the first group (α) from the two later groups (β and γ), saying that the first position maintains that the Demiurge is a kind of transcendent intellect that exists apart from any soul or the world of change, while the second and third interpretations agree that the Demiurge, as a Platonic god, must be a soul or at least the intelligence(s) immanent within souls. I reformulated the positions that divide them as:

- ⌘. ‘*Noöntic Transcendentalist*’: Those who recognize intellect as occupying a superior ontological stratum than soul. This view rejects the *Inherence of Intellect* (1’ below).
- ⌚. ‘*Noöntic Immanentist*’: Those who recognize no intellect over and above those inherent in souls. This view accepts the *Inherence of Intellect* (1’ below).

It was possible then, to reformulate the three jointly incompatible premises, 1-3, that distinguished the α , β , and γ camps into only two premises, 1’ and 2’. They are mutually exclusive to anyone accepting the ΔN , but both indispensable to any adequate reading of the *Timaeus* and any coherent reconstruction of Plato’s theology:

- 1'. For Plato intellect ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) always is immanent in a soul. (Inherence of Intellect)
- 2'. The Demiurge is an intelligible being (Transcendence of the Demiurge)

I labeled α' the views the *Noöntic Transcendentalist* (⌘) positions that accept 2’ but reject 1’ because of their commitment to ΔN , while I labeled β' all the *Noöntic Immanentist* (⌚) positions that accept 1’ but must reject 2’ because of their commitment to ΔN . Because their position leads to the conclusion that the Demiurge must be immanent in the

sense of being in time and space (as a soul or the intellect of a soul), I will call β' the 'Demiurgical Immanentists'. By contrast, we can call α' the '[Demiurgical] Traditionalists', for the view that the Demiurge is intelligible, transcendent, and superanimate (above soul) *Nous* was first formulated is an ancient one and became the dominant position among Middle Platonists and then Neo-Platonists,

1c. *Subtypes of Demiurgical Immanentists*

The Immanentist interpretations (\beth), broadly speaking, consist of the three subtypes of the β group (who accept the Venerability of the World-soul but reject the Distinctness of Demiurge and Soul) and on the Ur-soul positing γ group (who accept the Distinctness of Demiurge and Soul but reject the Venerability of the World-soul). Interestingly enough, these four groups can be represented as sharing overlapping interpretive commitments that are as robust between the β -subgroups and γ as they are among only the β subgroups. Two interesting dichotomies arise.

First there is a demiurge as inherent/immanent *nous* v. demiurge as soul split. (Represented by the two left hand columns v. the two right-hand columns below). β_1 and β_2 understand the ΔN principle quite directly, the Demiurge is *nous*, but treat the Demiurge as less of a specific being in Plato's system and as more of a symbol for rational causation. On the other hand, β_3 and γ insist that the Demiurge is something specific in Plato's cosmology, a soul that *instantiates nous*, rather than merely being a symbol of *nous*.

Second, there is a distinction between those groups that identify the Demiurge with the World-soul (the two central columns) and those that do not (the outer columns).

Table 5 : Demiurgical Immanentist Interpretations

*	Dem. represents immanent <i>nous</i>	Dem. and World-soul indistinct	The Demiurge is a soul	*
$\beta 1$. Dem. = <i>nous</i> of all Ψ s	$\beta 2$. Dem. = <i>nous</i> of $\Pi\Psi$	$\beta 3$ Demiurge = World-soul	γ . Demiurge = Ur-soul	
Cherniss	Theiler	Cornford	Taylor	
Dillon	Frutiger	Skemp	Vlastos	
	Festugière	Carone	Robinson	
* = Dem. and $\Pi\Psi$ distinct			Mason	

The distinctions above, ought to be at least stated, given that the various Immanentist camps do hold these differences dear and have debated over them extensively. However, the arguments that I will bring do not require them much further. Below I will go back to the α , β , and γ schema, referring to the α group as the Transcendentalist view, and the β and γ groups as the deflationary Immanentists and the Ur-soul Immanentists, respectively. I call all the β sub-groups deflationary, because none takes the Demiurge to be a significant and separate entity in his own right with an important role to play in Plato's theology, metaphysics, and cosmology. Rather, they reduce him to being a symbol for inherent *nous* or a beard for the World-soul, rather than its distinct creator.

2. Two out Three isn't good; The limitations of the three major interpretations

In the introduction, I added that on their own, premises 1, 2, and 3, were not mutually inconsistent, but that they became so once the ΔN principle was added to them. I now wish to prove why this is so, going through the three basic camps, α , β , and γ , in that order, and showing how the combination of the ΔN with two of the other propositions leads to the rejection of the third interpretive desideratum. So, in addition to 1, 2, and 3, above, I will add '0', to represent the ΔN .

2a. The Traditional Transcendentalist Interpretation

If 0. The Demiurge is Intellect,

and 2. The Demiurge is separate from the World-soul since he creates soul,

and 3. The World-soul is the eldest of all things that come-to-be.

then the Demiurge must not be a soul or anything else that has not come-to-be.

Therefore, the kind of Intellect that he is cannot be one that belongs to or is in a soul. So we must reject: 1. Intellect (for Plato) is always immanent in a soul.

The rejection of 1. was in no way controversial among Neo-Platonists. The Intellect and the Intelligible, i.e. Being, were one. Thus Intellect existed at the level of the Forms, often even *as* the self-comprehending Forms - simultaneously and forever the subject, object, and activity of cognition.¹³⁷ This was a timeless, unchanging being, quite distinct from the soul, which was in time.

The modern incarnation of this view, held by Hackforth et al., is committed to a transcendent Intellect with which they identify the Demiurge. Of the three main contemporary views it is the closest to the truth, since it preserves the ontological superiority of the Demiurge to his creations, including the soul, and maintains that he is an intelligible being. That is to say that is, in the generic sense, Transcendentalist. I will spend more time arguing against this view for several reasons. First, in virtue of its predominance in the history of Platonism, it requires attention. Second, among the three dominant camps this view comes the closest to my own regarding Plato's hypostases, and therefore arguing against it does the most to delineate and motivate my own position. Lastly, it is, in my estimation, the strongest of the three major positions, since it makes the best effort to recapture the third premise it loses from the triad of (1), (2), (3).

¹³⁷ On this point, however, there were some dissenters. Porphyry, most famously resisted the strict identity between the intellect and the intelligibles. Nevertheless, he too understood nous to be prior and superior to psyche.

The traditionalist transcendentalist view is undermined by claim 1, which is stated throughout the late dialogues and is prominently stated no less than *three times* in the *Timaeus*. To their credit, most contemporary proponents of this view recognize the need to reconcile their view with the Inherence of Intellect claim, and try to accept it in a restrictive form. Their defense is that when Plato makes the inherence claim, he is speaking of generated intellect - which is only found in souls, not bodies - but not Intellect itself. As Karfik puts it, “Der Demiurg ist ein wirkender νοῦς, *ohne Seele zu sein*. Eben als solcher ist er ἄριστος τῶν αἰτίων ([2004], 183-4 *emphasis his*). Therefore, they would say that 1. should be formulated as “all intellect comes-to-be within a soul.” Intellect itself, the Form, does not come to be, it simply is, and as such it is not covered by the inherence principle and need not *be* or, rather, *come-to-be*, in a soul. Let us call this the ‘two intellects defense’.

The two intellects defense is an ingenious one, as it bases itself on the authentically Platonic distinction between (the) Being (of) Φ , which is one, and the many things having- ϕ . And, so long as I am playing the Devil’s Advocate, I will offer this view a point of my own that adds to the two intellects defense’s plausibility. Typically the Inherence of Intellect principle is claimed in a “cosmological context”. It is invoked to repudiate the Anaxagorean view that bodies alone, without supervisory souls, could organize or move with intelligence. Its “target” is not the supposition of transcendent intellect. Hence it is a mistake of over-interpretation to understand it in this way. As with all fundamental philosophical theses, the statements of the Inherence thesis can have implications that reach far beyond their immediate context. For the sake of argument,

though, let us grant that all of its occurrences in the late dialogues are for sake of the “cosmological” point, and *not* the “ontological” one.¹³⁸

Now the devil has been given his due, but for all of its strengths, the two intellects defense still fails for the following reasons:

(1) In thoroughly “ontological” contexts, intellect is strictly distinguished from its intelligible objects; to wit there are two passages, discussed at length in the previous chapter, that make this point. First, there is an explicit denial of intellect being the same as intelligible beings in *Epistle VII*. Intellect is honored as that which is closest in likeness to the Forms, but it is not one of them (*Ep. VII* 342d1-3). The authenticity of *Epistle VII*’s provenance can be doubted, but no one can reasonably gainsay Plato’s authorship of *Republic VI*. In the analogy between the sun and the Form of the Good, intelligence and intelligibles are as sharply distinct from one another as sense perception is from sensible bodies (*R. VI* 508e1-509a5). As was previously shown, this is a clear and unavoidable implication of the central logic of the analogy.

At this point, the appropriate response on behalf of the two intellects argument would be a form of restatement. It is agreed that the intellects that come to be in souls are not their intelligible objects. Indeed, intelligence (understood as the highest type of knowledge) about the Form of Intelligence, is not the Form of Intelligence. The knowledge of Knowledge itself is knowledge, but not Knowledge itself.

Admittedly, this goes against the grain of the sun-analogy, for it is clear that vision is not the seeing of sight, vision is the seeing of visibles. Vision is not itself visible. On the other hand, the soul, though not an intelligible in the proper metaphysical

¹³⁸ Namely *Soph.* 248e7-249a8; *Phl.* 31c9-10; *Tim.* 30b1-6, 37c1-5, 46d5-6; *Laws XII* 961d1-11, 967a7-b4.

sense, is intelligible epistemically speaking. It is grasped through intellect, and not the senses. Intellect, however, is part of the soul; it is the true, authentic, and immortal core of the soul. If the soul is epistemically intelligible then the intellect should be as well. Besides, we who speak of the intellect must surely know of it in some way, and it is not by sense perception, so what remains?¹³⁹

A further argument is this: my position does not require that I categorically deny that Plato ever posited a Form of Intellect or a Form of Soul. Given that the Demiurge is an intelligible being, such a denial, if correct would immediately entail a refutation of the ΔN thesis. A denial of there being a Form of Soul and a Form of Nous is sufficient but not necessary for refuting ΔN . I do harbor such doubts, and in the next chapter I will consider arguments for denying these Forms in the context of understanding the Demiurge and his model. The arguments that follow attempt to show that the notion of Intellect itself is beset by critical, perhaps even fatal, difficulties. They are attacks against the very feasibility of the “second”, transcendent intellect that the two intellects defense tries to make room for.

(2) If the many ‘intellects’ always come to be in the many souls, then logically we should expect the Form of Intellect to be contained (in some sense) or interwoven with the Form of Soul. If the proposition of giving to Plato a Form of Soul is not objectionable enough on its own, then we should note two other *prima facie* problematic implications:

(3) The Demiurge should now be recognized as a *part* of his model (for it is the Form of a Living creature, and so it must interweave with the Forms of Soul and Intellect in such

¹³⁹ This is not the place for it, but I would argue that the same ‘bastard kind of reasoning’ by which the Receptacle is apprehended is what Plato ought to have identified as the means of knowing the soul. It seems to be an ability to abstract from sensible appearances, but not by apprehending the Forms, for the Receptacle, although eternal, is not an intelligible Form.

a way that it is the case that it is Life (i.e. is the model for 'being' alive) in virtue of 'having' Soul). If *part* will not do, then would one say that the Demiurge is the same as his *model*? (For other reasons we will consider that view later on in this chapter).

(4) Following the same model-imitation logic, we should presume that all the other Forms are, in some sense, located 'in' the Form of Intellect, if the Form of Intellect is the model for created intellects having knowledge of Intelligibles within it. The thought that the Forms are Ideas in the Mind of god ('Ideas' in the Platonic sense of Forms, but also the more familiar sense of mental content, perhaps concepts) was one held by a considerable number of ancient Platonists (by no means all), and even has a handful of modern defenders.¹⁴⁰ However it is replete with difficulties.

2b. *The Deflationary Demiurgical Immanentists*

Let us consider the next view, that the Demiurge is or represents the intellect of all souls (Cherniss, Dillon), the intellect of the World-soul (Theiler, Fustigière, Frutiger), or just is the World-soul (Cornford, Skemp, Carone). This camp interprets the account of the *Timaeus*, particularly the figure of the Demiurge and the creation (of soul), the least literally. They accept that:

0. The Demiurge is Intellect,

and 1. Intellect (for Plato) is always immanent in a soul.

and 3. The World-soul is the eldest of all things that come-to-be.

then the Demiurge must be a soul, but he cannot be any soul older than the World-soul.

He must either be the World-soul or Souls in general, or their respective intellects.

Therefore, the Demiurge cannot be wholly distinct from and prior to (the World)-soul.

¹⁴⁰ Perl [1998].

***So we must reject:* 2. The Demiurge is separate from (the World)-soul.**

This interpretation cannot give any account of why the *Timaeus* would at numerous points gloss the Demiurge as an intelligible being, or would contrast him as the uncreated, creator god, from his created children, the gods who create men. While Timaeus says that his is a likely account, the distinction between Being and coming-to-be is not a tentative one; this interpretation runs roughshod over it. Furthermore, a likely account with some internal tensions, inconsistencies, and vagaries is one thing; but an account whose central conceits are completely fictional is another thing altogether. However the idea that the one god created the other, i.e. that the Demiurge made the World-god, simply makes no sense at all on such a reading.

2c. The Ur-soul Demiurgical Immanentists

The third camp, which was championed first by A.E. Taylor (although he did not regard Timaeus' views as Plato's own), then Vlastos, T.M. Robinson, and most recently from Mason and Prince. This reading reacts against the wide-scale desertion of the details or even the general shrift of the early parts of Timaeus' creation story that marks the previous camp's readings by insisting on the distinctness and priority of the Demiurge from the souls he creates, including the World-soul. It also maintains the Inherence of Intellect. So if:

0. The Demiurge is Intellect,

and 1. Intellect (for Plato) is always immanent in a soul,

and 2. The Demiurge is separate from the World-soul since he creates soul,

then the Demiurge must be a soul, but a soul that is prior to and the cause of the World-soul and all other souls.

So we must reject: **3. The World-soul is the eldest of all things that come-to-be.**

This earlier soul I refer to as the ‘Ur-soul’. It is not to be confused with what I called ‘Proto-soul’ in chapter two, viz. the alleged psychic predecessor of created soul that Plutarch, von Perger, et al. identify in the flux of pre-creation and posit as an ingredient in the mixture at 35a-b. The Ur-soul, rather, must be a fully rational soul; the rationale for its postulation is the need to locate Demiurgical intellect in some soul other than the World-soul. The problems with this view are even more serious. First, there is no direct textual evidence for this “Ur-soul”. One does not preserve a more literal reading by *adding* details to the account that are not in the text. Second, it contradicts the presumably literal claim that the World-soul is the oldest of things that have come-to-be.¹⁴¹ Lastly, like the Cornford-Cherniss-Carone view, it cannot deal adequately the textual evidence that the Demiurge is of a different ontological category than souls.

Now, like the first group, this group attempts to defend itself by supposedly accepting the rejected claim (3) with a loophole based on the slippery notion of *coming-to-be*. They claim that the World-soul is the eldest of things that come to be. The Ur-soul, however, is not something that has ever come-to-be. Therefore its existence does not violate **the venerability of the World-soul** principle, strictly understood.

As we discussed in chapter 2, one can understand creation in the *Timaeus* as an event or a process (the E and P readings). For this defense to work, the Ur-soul Immanentists must presume an E-reading, and then claim that the World-soul’s creation

¹⁴¹ Accepting this claim about coming-to-be literally, i.e. temporally, should not be a problem given Vlastos’ view that there is a “time” before creation. Even if one rejects the temporal understanding of coming-to-be, one can still accept it as a metaphysical claim about the World-soul being the most real and stable of things among the inferior and dependent grade of existence that Plato refers to generically in the late dialogues as “becoming”. Crantor of Soli first presented this non-temporal but metaphysical interpretation of coming-to-be in the Academy. I concur with it. More on this below.

was some measurable amount of time before now, but not so in the case of the Ur-soul. But as we showed in our discussion of the ontology of soul in chapter 2, soul, by its nature, is something that has come-to-be *at least in the sense* of being something that is in space and is subject to motion and change. The Ur-soul would still be something that has come to be in this minimal sense. Therefore it is ontologically dependent on some cause. If causes can only be intelligent souls, then the Ur-soul will require an even prior soul for its existence, and that soul too, will need a cause, and so on, *ad infinitum*. It is a basic feature of Platonic metaphysics that things subject to change and in space (although not space itself) presuppose an unchanging, eternal, intelligible ground for their lesser form of subsistence in time. Once all three kinds of being are on the table (becoming, Being, and the receptacle), Being is even glossed as “that after which the thing coming to be is modeled *and which is the source of its coming to be* (50c7-d2).”

3. A Good *prima facie* Reason for Skepticism about the ΔN Thesis

The choice between God/Demiurge as transcendent Intellect and God/Demiurge as World-soul or Ur-soul is a false alternative, *if* it is a mistake in the first place to identify intellect with the Demiurge. Plotinus, Hackforth and Menn are partially right; they think that the Demiurge is not the immanent World-soul, but something at the level of intelligibles. However, the modern commentators must bend over backwards to make this compatible with Plato’s Inherence of intellect claim, since they think the Demiurge is Intellect, while Plotinus flatly rejects the Inherence principle, equating *Nous* with the Forms. The arguments against these three views are not sufficient to lay them to rest if it truly is the case that the Demiurge is Intellect, i.e. if ΔN is not false. Taken together, their shortcomings constitute a strong initial argument against ΔN , viz. if one assumes ΔN ,

then it becomes impossible to jointly maintain three clearly annunciated points in the *Timaeus* that any adequate interpretation of the dialogue and its Demiurge figure should be able to account for. However, Timaeus warned his listeners at the outset that they should not expect perfect precision or consistency in his tale, including as regards the gods. So until and unless we thoroughly undermine the ΔN thesis and refute the evidence adduced in its support, we cannot assume that there is any consistent interpretation of the Demiurge.

The onus of proof is on the one who asserts the positive. Those who accept ΔN must argue for it, before its non-adherents can or should argue against it. Nonetheless, we can (and shall) show that the ΔN cannot possibly be true given other, far more certain premises, but first we will begin by identifying the arguments brought forward in its defense (§II), and then we will reexamine the textual evidence on which those arguments depend in (§III). Having shown that the textual evidence does not support these arguments, we will lay out further philosophical arguments in §§IV-V against the very possibility of ΔN thesis being true.

§II. Reasons for maintaining the Demiurge is *Nous* (ΔN) thesis

1. *The motivations for denying the **Inherence of Intellect** principle*

1a. *Aristotle's views on *Nous* and *Noēsis Noēseōs**

In the previous chapter, (4), I discussed the **Inherence of Intellect** principle. We saw that Plato's late dialogues repeatedly make the claim that there cannot be any intellect (*nous*) apart from soul. In addition to an early mention of it in the *Euthydemus*, a commitment to it that can be inferred from the sun analogy in *Republic VI* and a possible reference to it in *Laws XII*, the principle has explicit occurrences in the *Sophist*, the

Philebus, *Epistle VII*, and the *Timaeus*, with no fewer than three statements of it in the case of the latter. Additionally, in the accounts of the World-soul in the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*, discussed in the first three chapters, we saw that they all identified the rational motion bestowed on the cosmos by the World-soul with the activity of its intellect and did likewise in the case of any other divine souls.

Given the foregoing, it would seem strange that from antiquity to the present day many interpreters have insisted that at the heart of Plato's theology there is a transcendent, intelligible Intellect playing the role of god. And yet, as discussed immediately above, the transcendentalist interpretive camp does insist upon this. I cannot argue for the following hypothesis here, but I believe that, among other things, Aristotle's views about *nous* played a major role in influencing ancient Platonists towards positions of this kind. Aristotle identified the Unmoved mover, which is an intellect, as god. Insofar as it was pure, unmixed, immaterial actuality it was its own intellectual activity. This activity of intellect is nothing other than thinking, the object of god's thinking being thinking itself, and thus god is itself as the process of thinking that thought of thinking. Thus he called it the "intellection of the intellection 'intellection' " (or thinking of the thought of thinking): *noēsis noēseōs noēsis*. When he further declared that intellect was identical with its objects, he made the position that intellect could be an intelligible and divine being at once more viable and attractive for all subsequent Platonists.¹⁴² For if

¹⁴² For divine thought as ἡ νοήσις νοήσεως νοήσις see *Λ.9* 1074b15ff especially 1074b34-5. For *nous* as identical with thinking its object *ibid* 1075a3-5, *DeAn.* I.3 407a5-7. For both points as pertaining to the nature of god see *Met.* *Λ.7* 1072b13-30, especially b18-24, *Λ.9* 1075a7-10 (where the thought that has itself as object is eternal [*aiōna* - αἰῶνα], unlike human thoughts which last for a certain period of time). That thought is only actual when it thinks (*Met.* *Θ.9* 1051a31-32), and that what thinks and what is thought are the same: *DeAn.* III.4 429b29-430a4. That knowledge in actuality is identical with its object: *DeAn.* III.5 430a19-20 = III.7 431a1-2, *Met.* *Λ.9* 1074b38-1075a5. I make no claim as to how Aristotle's statements in these passages *ought* to be understood; I merely cite the passages that formed the basis of a certain

intellect (*nous*) and its intelligible object (noēton/noētos) can be the same, then a god who is an intelligible being (e.g. the Demiurge) could be, nay *should be*, understood to be *nous* as well.¹⁴³

Given the already quoted passages in *Epistle VII* and book VI of the *Republic* and for reasons that I discuss below, I do not think that Plato identified intellect (*nous*) with intelligible objects (noēta) any more than he identified sense perception (aisthēsis) with sensible objects (aisthēta). That is to say, not at all. But such was cleverness and appeal of Aristotle's suggestion, that it would have been easy for Platonists to internalize it and assume its availability to Plato (much as they absorbed the form/matter and actuality/potentiality distinctions and used these in their Platonic theories and exegeses.)

1b. The ΔN thesis as the main, modern motivation for transcendent intellect

Be that as it may, there is a different reason for the presence of this position in modern Platonic scholarship, which traces its roots back to the philology of the 19th and early 20th c. that explicitly aimed to free the interpretation of Plato from Pagan and Christian Neo-Platonic syncretism. The main reason that modern, 'transcendentalist' commentators attribute to Plato's ontology and theology a divine and transcendent Intellect is that they identify Intellect with the Demiurge.

Whereas the Demiurge is explicitly specified in the *Timaeus* as being an eternal intelligible being and as being the creator of all soul, he cannot be the kind of intellect that is inherent in souls. He must be an exception to the **Inherence** principle. For if he

viewpoint that was absorbed by Platonists. Platonists then attributed this view to Plato, which in my estimation was inappropriate back reading.

¹⁴³ Interestingly enough, Dillon does not believe that there is a significant difference between Xenocrates' divine *Nous* whose thoughts are the Forms, and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover in *Met* Λ (107). This is precisely where I would disagree most vehemently. *Nous* having *nous* as object, and *Nous* having *Noēta* as objects draws a significant dividing line in theologies.

were to be inherent in soul, then he would be immanent rather than transcendent, thus not an intelligible being, and, moreover, he could scarcely be the creator of soul as such, for he himself would be a soul or be inherent in a soul, thus presupposing for his own existence his alleged creations. Ergo he must be an intelligible kind of intellect, separate from and prior to the kind residing in souls. This seems to fly in the face of the well-grounded **Inherence** principle, but the transcendentalists point to a loop-hole in it: transcendent and intelligible intellect is the Form of Intellect, or ‘the Intellect Itself’, while the intellects that are inherent in souls are the imitations of that Form which come-to-be in the sensible world. In other words, they say that they accept that *nous* only *comes-to-be* in souls, but they add that the Form of *Nous* never comes to be, it simply is.

The main reason that their Immanentist opponents identify the Demiurge as a psychic entity (soul or intellect that is inherent in soul) is that they too identify the Demiurge with Intellect, but they deny that there are any exceptions to or loopholes in the **Inherence of Intellect** principle. Thus they conclude that the Demiurge can only be intellect by being a soul or the intellect in/of soul(s).

2. The motivations for adopting the ΔN thesis: three basic arguments

The question to ask now is obvious. Why do all of these different interpretive camps accept the idea that the Demiurge is *Nous*? It is a very ancient thesis, it was nigh universal among the middle and neo-Platonists, but such provenance has seldom won sympathy for interpretations of Plato in the 19th and 20th centuries. Quite the contrary, really, as scholars have, since the philological revolution of the 19th century, sought to understand ‘Plato by Plato’, i.e. directly through his own body of texts rather than through the ancient commentary tradition.

Yet the thesis is all but completely universally held; when it is invoked in argument (say to prove that Demiurge is Ur-soul or to refute the idea that the Demiurge is the Good) it is seldom argued for, and even when it is not invoked, it goes unchallenged. To some extent it is an assumption that is so widely held among interpreters of Plato's theology and held that its proof is not really called for.

There are positive reasons that the thesis is maintained though. It is not a mere dogma. There are a number of statements in the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws* that suggest the position. The basic rationale for the widespread commitment to the ΔN is this: the Demiurge is the preeminent example in Plato's works of a causal against giving order to the world. Elsewhere, *nous* and/or soul is spoken of as causing order in the world. In seeking a coherent understanding of Plato's cosmology and theology, it is natural to suppose that these causes are the same. Hence there is an argument that runs:

1. Divine souls or the World-soul, on account of *nous*, cause the good order in the world
2. The Demiurge causes the good order in the world
3. Therefore, the Demiurge is the divine soul, the World-soul, or the *nous* on account of which the former cause the good order in the world.

Call this the '**psyche as cause**' argument.

Even more typically the argument for the ΔN thesis runs as follows:

1. *Nous* is what is ultimately responsible for there being goodness and order in the world
2. The Demiurge is the cause of the goodness and order in the world
3. Therefore, the Demiurge is *nous*.

Call this the '**nous as cause**' argument.

Finally, there are texts that some interpreters read as directly identifying the Demiurge with Intellect. Let us call this the '**direct**' argument. The '**nous as cause**'

argument is the most common, as it can be easily used in combination with the other two. Interpreters depending more exclusively on the ‘**psyche as cause**’ argument tend to give special weight to *Laws* X, where they understand Plato to be claiming that soul is the sole cause of what comes-to-be in the cosmos. This can be difficult to maintain in light of the separate, disorderly motion attributed to the receptacle/bodies in the *Statesman* and *Timaeus*, unless one A) goes the Gnostic route, and thinks of there being a pre-rational (thus bad) soul in pre-creation, or B) takes the *Laws* to be Plato’s final word on cosmology and theology and to supersede any earlier work, or C) tries to find some way to allow the alleged exclusion of causal powers from non-souls to still allow for non-psychic straying, e.g. by referring to the negative influence that bodies can have on souls.¹⁴⁴

The passages used most often in indirect arguments (i.e. the **psyche as cause** or **nous as cause** varieties) are the first argument from *Laws* X, especially 896c-897d and the cosmological passage of the *Philebus*, especially 28d5-30e3. The passage most often pointed to in ‘**direct**’ arguments, and with the best reason, is *Timaeus* 47e3-48a5, and it can be divided into two separate pieces of evidence, 47e3-5 and 47e5-48a5. It is often combined with indirect **nous as cause** arguments as well).

§III. Texts on Psychic Causation used to support the *AN* Thesis

1. *The Passage on the World-soul in the Philebus*

Passages at *Philebus* 28d5-30e3 and *Laws* 896d-897b, especially have seemed to suggest that soul is the only cause, and I here wish to dispute such interpretations of those passages. The Demiurge, whatever he is, is a cause; indeed, he is the best of causes (*Tim.*

¹⁴⁴ As Vlastos points out, this will not help, for this negative influence must consist in bodies changing the orderly motions of souls, and thus being efficacious [1939/1965].

29a5-6), and he is presented as the maker and father of the best of all things that come to be, the World-soul and World-body. In the *Philebus*, Intellect is shown to belong in the kind of causes, and it is even understood by some to be the cause of all. It has been inferred thence that the Demiurge must be Intellect.

1. The Demiurge is the best of causes
2. Intellect belongs to the kind that is the cause of all things; orders and marshals the years, seasons, and months; belongs to a kingly soul in the nature of Zeus; and (as the thinkers of old held) always rules (ἄρχει) the world (*Phl.* 30d10-e1; c4-6; d1-3.)
3. So Intellect is the highest or best cause (or the cause of all)
4. Therefore, the Demiurge and Intellect are (essentially) the same

Does the fact that *Nous*/World-soul is *a* cause and one that rules the cosmos imply that the Demiurge, best of causes, must be *Nous* and/or the World-soul? This inference does not follow. Understanding the Demiurge as the best αἴτιος (cause) is compatible with the *Philebus*' treatment of the Intelligent World-soul a member of the class of causes of orderly mixture. This class, as a whole, are all the causes of everything, but that does not make any one of its members the sole cause. Furthermore, we should expect that the World-soul, even if it is the creation of a separate being, the Demiurge, should rule the cosmos forever. That is the task that the World-soul's father gives to "her" in the *Timaeus*, when he makes it so as to be the mistress and ruler over the World-body (*Tim.* 34c5-35a1).

What the text specifically states, in addition to the points cited in the argument immediately above are the following claims: Protarchus says, "The only account that can do justice to the wonderful spectacle presented by the cosmic order of sun, moon, and

stars and the revolution of the whole heaven, is that *reason arranges it all* (*noun panta diakosmein* - νοῦν πάντα διακοσμεῖν) (*Phl.* 28e2-5).” However, he does so, not at the conclusion of the argument but as his initial endorsement of the view of [their] forbearers that Socrates proposes to him, that the universe is steered (*diakuberan* - διακυβεῖσθαι) by intellect (νοῦν) and the marshalling of some wonderful reason (*phronēsin tina thaumastēn suntattousan* - φρόνησιν τινα θαυμαστήν συντάττουσαν) - rather than the opposite alternative of “unreason and irregularity as chance would have it (*Phl.* 28d5-9).” So this is a generic sort of a position rather than any specific proven outcome.

But, even if this is to be taken verbatim as Plato’s view, it still does not suffice to show that this ‘intellect’ or ‘wonderful reason’ is the Demiurge. For, again, we have something gathering, arranging, leading, or ruling over the cosmos – which is a fine thing indeed – but that is distinct from creating the universe altogether.

As evidence that there is a difference between what marshals or orders the cosmos (*suntattein* - συντάττειν) from what creates it, consider that the universe which this intellect rules over is described as already being made up of the four “so-called” elements, and that individuals get their small share of fire, air, water, and earth from the enormous sum of the whole (*Phl.* 29a9ff). Then consider the fact that the availability of these elements, in the far more developed cosmological theory of the *Timaeus*, are not a given, but first must be constructed by the Demiurge out of the elementary triangles (*Tim.* 53a8-b7; 56c3-7). Indeed, their “traces” did not even qualify for the names they now possess, e.g. fire, water, before the Demiurge gave them their proportionality (*Tim.* 69b3-c3). This applies not only for the so-called elemental bodies, but also for the soul (which

said intellect must reside in), as our discussion in chapter 2 of the early stages of the creation of the World-soul demonstrated exhaustively, if unfortunately also exhaustingly.

Along this line, we can note that Socrates says that “There is plenty of the unlimited in the universe as well as sufficient limit, and that there is above them a certain cause, of no small significance, that orders and coordinates the years, seasons, and months, and which has every right to the title of wisdom and reason (*Phl.* 30c3-8).” The cause of orderly mixture is that which *mixes* limit into the unlimited, and intellect does do this. But notice that this account already presumes that there is plenty of limit in the universe for intellect to apply to the unlimited. Where does it come from? In the *Timaeus* it is the Demiurge who puts order into the ‘thoroughly god-forsaken’ flux of the receptacle prior to creation when the Demiurge gives things their distinctive shapes “using forms and numbers (*Tim.* 53b4-5).”

Within the realm of becoming, soul maintains the orderly progression of celestial revolutions, seasons, bodily integrity and the like. But that does not mean that it creates the basic structures in the world, including itself; yet the soul is definitively understood as something that comes to be in the *Timaeus* and *Laws*. The *Philebus*, as it is less concerned with ontology and cosmology generally, and particularly with the purely intelligible realm, is not interested in discussing the intelligible causes of the immanent causes of the cosmos’ order.

2. Evidence from the passages on the World-soul in *Laws* X

A stronger case for identifying the Demiurge with the intelligent World-soul because of their causal roles can be developed from *Laws* X. Therein, soul seems to be spoken of as the sole cause of change among things that come to be. A few bits of text

seem to be responsible for leading to the idea that the soul is the sole cause. First, having given the definition of soul as motion capable of moving itself, that is self-motion, the Athenian goes on to suggest that, for that very reason it is sufficiently shown that “it is the first genesis and motion of all the things that are, and have come to be, and will come to be, and of the opposites of these, since it appears to be the cause of both all the alterations and motions, respectively, in all these things (896a5-b1).”

Here, soul is not called the first principle, or *protēn archēn* of all the things that are, and have come to be, and will come to be, (i.e. things in time). Rather, it is the first *genesis* and the first *motion* of these. To say that it is the first motion of these is to say that it is a primary type of motion. Self-motion must come first, but bodies being moved from without, must be moved secondarily. So their motion, from without, originally starts from something that has motion within itself (i.e. from a soul). The first genesis seems to be compatible with the idea that is the point of issue at this stage of the proof, viz. that soul is the first thing generated.

That is not to say that it is the first generator, or first maker of all things that have come to be and pass away. This is not to say that genesis is equivalent to being something generated - that is the first thing *that has come to be*, but among those things that have generation (among those past, present, and future) soul will be the first to generate. Visibly being a cause it moves secondary movers that are in bodies, and it is responsible for all the alterations and all the kinesis (change or the motion) within them. To say that is perfectly compatible with something else higher than soul being responsible for the mere fact that solid bodies exist, as well as the mere existence of souls and for something else to be responsible for what relative stability and rest that they have. One could well

say that the Demiurge is not even an unmoved mover for Plato, he is an unmoved stabilizer, a principle not of the motion or change of things, but of their relative stability.

So soul, here, is responsible for moving and changing those things that are in time, but this does not make soul the maker of those things, only, as it were the manager and arranger of those things once they are in the cosmos and once it is in the cosmos. At the end of 896d and the beginning of 896e, the Athenian asks if soul dwells within, and has the run of the house, as it were, in all the things that are, then won't it also necessarily appear to dwell within the heavens? Clinias readily agrees to this. That the soul pervades the entire body of the world and all the secondary movers is not a complication for posing a separate non-psychic demiurge. In fact, the Demiurge stretches the soul throughout the cosmos in the *Timaeus* as we saw in chapter 2; but soul is said to dwell and have control, or have the run of the house, over all things that are moved *kinoumenous*. This claim is once again one of moving around and managing things in motion, not one of creating. Similarly, at the end 896e and 897a we are told that soul drives and leads all the things throughout the heavens, earth, and the sea through its own motion. This too is a matter of leading, governing, and dwelling within, but it is not a matter of creating.

3. *Causes v. Auxiliary causes at Timaeus 46c-e*

Within the *Timaeus*, the textual basis for supposing that only souls are causes - for only souls can possess intellect, *nous*, and only things possessing intellect are real causes, (whereas bodies that are moved from without are merely *sunaitia*, auxiliary causes - is to be found at 46c-e. Having just explained how the World-soul as a creative god creates the nature of vision, making use of the fire of the sun and the fire of the eye and reflection, *Timaeus* muses that such flames are merely auxiliary causes, though, but

because they cause condensation and rarefaction and so forth they are frequently mistaken for being actual causes. This repeats the complaint against the natural philosophers for identifying material causation with true causation found in the *Phaedo* 97c-99c. Now these auxiliary causes, are enumerated as various elemental bodies. Because they cannot possess logos or *nous*, for only the soul can possess *nous*, they cannot be true causes and they are quote “moved by others and set still others in motion by necessity.”

Here then, we see that in the *Timaeus* Plato is combining two different cosmological distinctions together. The first is from the *Phaedo*: the notion of actual causes which show intelligence or which are for the sake of the good as against material or auxiliary co-causes, without which there would not be some action, but which are not responsible for actions. The second distinction is between primary and secondary movers such as in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*. That is: there are those things which move themselves and move others, i.e. souls, and then there are bodies which are moved only by others though they pass on motion to others as well. When combined, we get the notion that there are things which are intelligent and move things of their own accord and then there are things lacking in intelligence which become moved and secondarily pass on their motion to other things by inertia, thus introducing straying from rational order.

On this basis, the lover of wisdom will distinguish, on the one hand, as primary causes those things that possess *nous* and episteme, and will only secondarily recognize those things that are moved by others. And, in consequence, the account of *Timaeus* and his fellows must likewise speak separately of both types of causes. Those that are lead to craft with intellect good and beautiful things are to be separated from the other type that

lead to randomness. Now, it could be supposed that since the discussion here covers causes and the Demiurge is the best of causes that this should suggest that only the intelligence that is in souls is properly considered causal, and that this should imply that the demiurge too must be a World-soul possessing *nous*.

But it is worth recognizing two things: first that this distinction between primary and secondary causes occurs in the context of the creative activity of the created gods making human sense organs. In so doing they are making use of auxiliary causes that are just now being discussed for the first time. Earlier when we saw the activities of the Demiurge, although he made use of ‘material’ to make the soul and although he imposed order on a world in chaos there is little in the way of him actively involving himself with and making compromises to necessity or auxiliary causes. This seems to be an account especially tailored to the introduction of creation by the created gods. The Demiurge conquers necessity by giving it order and making bodies and souls out flux. Divine souls organize and arrange these ordered things, contending as necessary with the inherent resistance of bodies.

Furthermore, we should note that the distinction between self-movers and other-movers, which is here connected to the idea of causes and auxiliary causes, is a distinction between the motion of souls and the motion of bodies. Wherefore it appears in the immortality argument in the *Phaedrus* and wherefore it appears in the argument for the existence of gods in book X of the *Laws*. These distinctions are means of distinguishing between the kinds of things that might be considered causes among things that come to be. Souls, are things possessing understanding, intellect, science, etc. and that are self-moved. So souls are proper causes and in this case they are divine causes-

the created gods, whereas the material conditions with which they deal cause subordinate activities by passing on the inertia they already had. Thus these are to be considered either hypothetical necessities or factors introducing randomness. But this does not suggest that there are no causes at all that are other than these two categories. These are of course categories of causes that are used to explain changes within coming to be or to explain, for example, structures of things in the created world such as the human body. They are not, at least not yet, supposed to account for the order of the world as such. The suggestion that even the demiurgical activities of the creation of the World-soul and of the so-called elements is an activity of *nous*, a rational cause, will be discussed further under the heading of text 48a.

At 37a1-2, speaking of the World-soul, Timaeus says that it “has been brought into being by the most excellent of things intelligible and eternal.” Since the World-soul has the Demiurge as its Cause, Father, Maker, etc. we can infer that he is this most excellent of eternal, intelligible things. Earlier we were told that the Demiurge wished to make the cosmos (which is one visible, living thing) as much like what is most beautiful and perfect of all intelligible things (30d1-3). This too points to the Demiurge being an intelligible thing, indeed the best of intelligible things, for less than one Stephanus page earlier Timaeus tells Socrates that in creating the Cosmos the Demiurge “desired that all things should come as near as possible to being like himself” (29e3). Either they are the same thing or Plato is forgetting himself very quickly.

Intellect is possessed by the best of naturally visible things (30b1-2). The qualification that this is among visible things is important – we need not think that the Demiurge must be best because Intelligence is the best thing *simpliciter*. The best of

intelligible things need not have or be *intelligence*, but the best *sensible* things do have intelligence, for as an intelligible, the Demiurge is not naturally visible, hence he need not have intelligence to be best.

§IV. Intelligence as Cause in the *Timaeus* as support for the *AN* Thesis

1. *Intellect and Necessity as Principles in the *Timaeus**

The Demiurge makes the cosmos to be as good as possible. That is the first axiom, as it were, of Timaeus' λόγος. Straightaway we begin to learn what the goodness of the cosmos amounts to. It is made in the imitation of a timeless, intelligible model. The model is truly unchanging and out of all time, attributes which the cosmos as a created thing can never enjoy. However it is the closest temporal analog to the unmoving sempiternal: it is an eternal thing that moves constantly and consistently (that is unchanging change). That intelligible model is Life that comprehends within itself all Forms of life. Hence both it and the cosmos in imitation of it enjoy unity and completeness.

Again, the cosmos 'is made to be as *good as possible*', and early on we get a quite clear sense of what the cosmos' goodness consists in, but it is only later that we begin to fully understand the concessive or restrictive force of "*as possible*". Part of the limitation is implicit from the beginning of Timaeus' speech in the contrasts between Being and Becoming and then between the Sempiternal and the merely Eternal. The world that comes to be cannot be as good as the intelligible world, which truly is, for the former is of an inferior ontological grade. Its inferiority is witnessed by its changes. However, Timaeus has a great deal more to say about the imperfections of the created world and their relationship to, or rather their estrangement from, the divine. In fact, his account is

so substantive that it demands a new ontological postulate in addition to Being and Becoming: Space. More on that in a moment.

To the extent that the world is good, it is the product of Intelligence. Where the world shows orderly motion and rational, mathematical harmony it is due to reason. The constructive, purely beneficent explanatory principle of Reason/Intellect/Intelligence (*nous* - νοῦς) stands in opposition against Necessity (*anagkē* - ἀνάγκη). Intelligence and necessity are said to clash, but intelligence prevails, harnessing necessity to work on its behalf through persuasion. Translated from this highly metaphorical language into terms of explanation, this is Timaeus' way of introducing the distinction between true causes, which are rational and teleological, from material "co-causes", which are merely the mechanisms through which and with which reason operates. Thus the intelligence/necessity dichotomy carries forward the ideas about properly teleological explanation that were presaged in the *Phaedo* in Socrates' autobiographical discussion of his rejection of Anaxagoras and abandonment of natural philosophy.

From the perspective of this powerful explanatory scheme, it is natural and correct to align the Demiurge with the side of Intelligence. The Demiurge, after all, is the one who puts mathematical limits into the world. On its own that might not sound quite like the operation of intellect/intelligence, for Timaeus explains the operation of intellect by locating it in the soul and then contrasting the self-directed and sustained motion of organisms with souls from the blind inertia of lifeless bodies. But once necessity is further explained, the source of order seems more plausibly identifiable with intelligence. The world is made in space, which is uncreated but carries disorderly motion in its

turbulent womb. To use the Craftsman analogy, the Demiurge must make the world out of material that is extremely malleable but also highly unstable.

The cosmos is said to be of ‘a mixed birth’ Space, a.k.a. the Wet-nurse or Receptacle is called the “mother” of becoming. If so, then the “Father and Maker”, the Demiurge, would seem to be other parent. Take uncreated space and the uncreated creator with his model, and then you will get the ordered coming-to-be of the cosmos.

We can restate that line of thought as a simple argument:

1. The Demiurge is responsible for making order in space
2. The disorderly motion of space is what constitutes necessity
3. Necessity is overcome by intelligence
4. Therefore, the Demiurge is intelligence

This is admittedly a loose argument. For one thing, it is not the Demiurge who is named as the Father, here, but the Forms as a whole. It is precisely in the gaps between the similar but not identical middle terms where the argument will ultimately falter. For now, though, its intuitive strength is clear. Especially for those who are disinclined to overpopulate Plato’s ontology and thus seek to interpret the Demiurge as merely symbolic, it is attractive to view him as a personification of the great force of reason in the cosmos. But what exactly does the text have to say?

2. A wide or narrow reading of *Timaeus* 47e3-5?

At 47e3-5, transitioning to the introduction of the receptacle, but having already distinguished the opposition of the cause of intelligence and the co-cause and wandering cause of necessity, Timaeus sums up the preceding by saying, “Now in all but a brief part of the discourse I have just completed I have presented *what has been crafted by intellect*

(τὰ διὰ νοῦ δεδημιουργημένα).” One can read widely or narrowly “the discourse I have just completed (τὰ μὲν οὖν παρεληλυθότα τῶν εἰρημένων)”, i.e. as referring to everything from 29b to 47e including the creation of the World-soul or else only to the creation of human beings by the lesser gods following the Demiurge’s speech to them, i.e. 42^{eff} or 44^{dff}. The ‘wide’ reading identifies Intellect as the cause of order and goodness of everything in the cosmos, even divinities such as the World-soul. As the Demiurge is the best of causes (29a5-6) and the maker of the cosmos, it should follow that he is (the personification of) Νοῦς.

But if the wide reading is correct, philologically speaking, then it embroils us in the problems with the Inherence of Intellect principle that the Noöntic Transcendentalist line faces. Insofar as ΔΝ is antecedently known to be problematic, if a narrow reading of that line which does not evidence ΔΝ is possible, then we should prefer it on the minimal grounds of basic internal consistency. So, is the narrow reading philologically viable?

The strongest, but ultimately insufficient reasons for taking the narrow reading these: we can take the end of the Demiurge’s speech and his proceeding “to abide at rest in his own customary nature” to be a natural break point, while the subsequent creation of the human body by the created gods is a relatively self-contained section, wrapped up just before the introduction of the receptacle. Moreover, the discussion of the disruption of the mortal soul by birth/embodiment from 42e-44d is a preface to the discussion of the organs of sense and the introduction of the distinction between intelligent cause and non-intelligent “co-cause”.

However, it becomes clear immediately following 47e5 that we are speaking “widely” about what has come before, i.e. about the creation of the World-soul and the

World-body and not just the interrupted beginning of the creation of mortal humans by the created gods after the Demiurge's retirement. Let us see why.

3. *The Demiurge's earliest work referred to with "Intellect" at Timaeus 47e5-48a5*

There is one place where the Demiurge does seem to be referred to as *nous*. I will quote the whole passage:

"For this ordered world is of mixed birth: it is the offspring of a union [or confrontation] of Necessity and Intellect [*nous*]. Intellect prevailed over Necessity by persuading it to direct most of the things that come to the character of what is most good, and the result of this subjugation of Necessity to wise persuasion was the initial formation of this universe."

The text seems to suggest that necessity is being persuaded to act towards the 'character of what is best' and this could be translated and understood as the Form of the Good, or it could be read as if this is the World-soul, which has a view of good, moving and marshalling bodies towards a more ideal path. What links this reference to *nous* to the Demiurge is the phrase: 'the initial formation of this universe'. It is the Demiurge who is responsible for the initial formation of the universe (53a-b), so he is in some way clearly implicated here.

So we must accept that the Demiurge is in some way being referred to with the terminology of '*nous*' here. Can we give a plausible reason of why this is so, if, as we have been arguing, he is not *nous*, and that no noetic thing is ever *nous*? I think a few things can be said. First, these lines introduce a rather purple passage, inspired by other cosmogony tales, where two forces vie for supremacy, one divine and one usually representing chaos much like Zeus and Typhoeus and the many other Near-Eastern and Mediterranean examples I cited at the beginning of chapter 2. It is little exaggeration to say that in most of the creation myths of cultures near to Plato's Greece, a battle between

a heavenly god and a force of chaos simply was a part of a proper cosmogony story. Lest one think that Plato would have nothing to do with such things, one need only consider that the *Timaeus*' sister dialogue, the *Critias*, was itself intended as a story like the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapiths wherein a force of reason (Greeks) defeats an evil, powerful foe – and in this case, one from the sea. Moreover, *Nous* is the traditional cosmological symbol of rational order from Xenophanes on, so this may be Plato writing in a style meant to evoke thoughts from a specific kind of genre.

A better reason could be this. *Nous* is a kind of knowledge or rationality. It can also be the faculty that apprehends such knowledge. In the latter sense, calling the Demiurge *nous* has significant metaphysical implications vis à vis the **Demiurge is Nous** thesis. But in the former sense it could be much more innocent. Consider a term like “mathematics”. As a body of knowledge, Plato might well say that only a soul knows mathematics, indeed mathematics is only ever found in a soul. But then, pointing out geometrical order, he could also say that, mathematics is in fire or water. That should not be taken to imply that suddenly these bodies are intelligent. But if this could be said about *nous*.

Furthermore, Forms can contain sub-Forms as genera to species, while the Form of the Good, which in the next chapter I argue for identifying with the Demiurge, ‘generates’ (not in time, of course) all the other Forms by recursively operating on plurality. The way that a superior Form incorporates the lesser Form, or the way derivative Forms and mathematical structures unravel out of the Good are a kind of possession that cannot be called knowledge, but that should neither be called mindless or unknowing. It is a direct immediate connection that does not require knowledge.

Knowledge of X-itself is a runner up to being X-itself, or to containing X-itself. But that is difficult to put into words. Saying that the Demiurge ‘knows this’ can be a shorthand for that higher more immediate kind of connection. Consider the idea of Intellectual intuition, whereby God might know a particular not by representation of it, but by creation of it – thus God could know things in themselves, unmediated by any form of awareness, not by gaining a cognitive grasp on the particular, but by causing it. Such would be the ‘knowledge’ that one Form would have of another. For Plato, this probably should not even be called intuition, but having no way to speak of the connection between maker/logical container and made/contained would be problematic too.

Lastly, nous is actively at work in the World, while the Demiurge, if he is intelligible, cannot directly interact with the world of change. Nevertheless, he is obviously responsible for order and rationality in the world. So using the term ‘nous’ can be a more dynamic way of speaking about the Demiurge, qua his effects, rather than by virtue of his proper nature.

§V. Further Arguments that the Demiurge is not Intellect

1. *Intellect ≠ Intelligible*

The implications of the Demiurge being the *best* of intelligible beings will be explored in the last chapter. For now, we need only consider how being *intelligible* differs from being *intelligence*. The distinction between intelligence and intelligible is an easy one to make, and it is one which Plato has every metaphysical reason not to blur. An ‘αἰσθητόν’ (*aisthēton*) is the object of sense or something which can potentially be the object of sense, depending on whether we translate the term as “perceptible [thing]” or “perceived [thing]”. Likewise, a ‘νοητόν’ (*noēton*) is a thing that is or can be made

known to intelligence. Αἴσθησις (*aithēsis*) and νόησις (*noēsis*), however, are the activities of perceiving and thinking, and νοῦς is the organ for having or the state of having comprehension of a *noēton*. Now, for Plato, like most Greek philosophers, *aisthēsis* is said to occur “in” souls, even though perceivable bodies are not souls (though they might possess them) and souls definitely are not perceptible. Souls, the loci of perception, are invisible, imperishable, self-moved, etc. Bodies, the objects of perception, are visible, perishable, moved from without, etc. In other words, the process and organ of representing an object of cognition need not be and in fact are not metaphysically of a kind with those objects that they represent.

As it is with perception, so too with intellect. For Plato, intellect is allegedly always in a soul. In Plato’s late dialogues souls are still considered indestructible, but they are also designated as things-that-come to be. Souls can inhabit bodies and they move; indeed self-motion and thus life is their essence. They are, according to the *Phaedo*, more like intelligibles than sensibles, but they are not identified with intelligibles. In the *Timaeus*, the material of souls is described as a mixture of the Being and Becoming of the three most general kinds: being, sameness, and difference. Intelligibles stand firm, without change (38a3), for this is tantamount to their being the stable objects of real knowledge (*Soph.* 249b-d). They exist in no place or time whatever, they never come-to-be but always are, and they do not “descend”, and they cannot be souls.

2. The Demiurge is a Sempiternal, Intelligible Being

Plato’s notion of atemporal being helps to further my case that the Demiurge is *intelligible* and not anything that is in the cosmos. The atemporal eternality of beings that

serve as the model for the cosmos are designated with the term of art “sempiternality” (*diaiōnia* - διαίωνία) (*Tim.* 38b8, 39e2). Terms such as “was”, “will be”, “before”, and “after” are inapplicable to sempiternal beings, which are out of time. “That which always and unchangingly stays the same cannot become older or younger through time... (38a3-4).” The sempiternality of real beings, i.e. intelligibles, is contrasted with the immortality *in time* of the cosmos (called heavens) and of the passage of time itself, both of which *come to be* together: “And [the heavens] came to be after the model of that which is sempiternal, so that it might be as much like the model as possible. For the model is something that ‘is being’ for all *eternity*, while it, on the other hand, has been, is, and shall be for all time, forevermore (38b7-c3).”

This distinction between uncreated, atemporal being and created eternity in, with, and of time is used to distinguish the model of the cosmos from the cosmos itself. “The purpose [of celestial revolutions] was to make this living thing as like as possible to that perfect and intelligible Living Thing, by way of imitating its sempiternality (39d8-e2).” In describing how and why the Demiurge creates the world’s body as a sphere, Timaeus says, “Applying this entire train of reasoning about the god who was to be at some time (*ton pote esomen theon* - τὸν ποτὲ ἐσόμενον θεόν), the god who always is (*ontos aei theou* - ὄντος ἀεὶ θεοῦ) made it smooth and even all over (34a8-b1).” “Always being” (*aei ὄn/on* - ἀεὶ ὄν/ὄν) is the epithet that Timaeus uses for intelligible beings from the very beginning of his cosmological speech, and it is definitely the Demiurge who makes the smooth shape of the body of the cosmos, so this shows that the Demiurge is such a being (27d6).

Now, at this point in the speech Timaeus has gotten ahead of himself, speaking of the World-body before dealing with the World-soul. However, it is untenable to take the ‘god who always is’ as the World-soul and thus to read this merely as the creation of body by soul. The soul is never called “ἀεὶ οὔσα” (*aei ousa*) here. In fact, in the very next paragraph, which introduces the World-soul, it is spoken of as coming-to-be, and it is given temporal epithets such as “older” to compare it with the World-body (34c1-5).

3. *Souls as things that have come to be, not Intelligibles*

The passage immediately above leads me to my next important point: the Demiurge is neither the World-soul nor any other kind of soul. The same epithets of eternal being and atemporality which supported understanding the Demiurge as an *intelligible* being rather than *intelligence* suggest *a fortiori* that he is not a soul.

In Plato’s last dialogue, the *Laws*, and in the *Timaeus* his position is clear that souls are things that have come to be. This clearly rules it out of contention for being an intelligible *that always is, and never comes to be*. Whereas the Demiurge is an intelligible, he cannot be a soul.

Chapter 6 - *The Demiurge and the Good: Uncovering the Father and Maker of All*

§I. The Demiurge in the *Timaeus* is the Form of the Good

In the previous chapter, I presented my arguments for why the Demiurge was neither Intellect nor soul. In so doing I presented the positive evidence that the Demiurge is an intelligible being, indeed the best of intelligibles. He is an integral part of the *Timaeus*' cosmological and metaphysical scheme. He plays an important cosmological and metaphysical role in other dialogues as well. So it is incumbent that we give a positive account of the Demiurge and a complete one, for simply admitting that the Demiurge is intelligible does not yet tell us very much about him.

There are two ways we might get a further characterization and even an identification of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*: we can look at what he is said to be, and we can look at what he is said to do. A full list of everything that the Demiurge is said to be or to do in the *Timaeus* is not necessary; we only need a representative selection. And since I have already argued why he must be regarded as an intelligible, the lists below and my analysis of their items aim only to capture his specific identity, i.e. if he is a Form then the one that he is. Some of his activities may seem to run afoul of his being an Intelligible, e.g. if he takes action and then ceases to do so, then he would seem to be subject to change. These I deal with at the end of the chapter when I consider the limitations that prevent giving a fully literal reading of all Demiurgical activities described in the dialogue.

1. He is best of intelligibles – what Form is better than the Good itself?
2. He is the best of causes (*Tim.* 29a5-6)– the ultimate cause (*aitía* - αἰτία) in the *Phaedo* is supposed to be the Good (*Phd* 99c). Also, he could not be the best

possible maker if there were something better and more real than himself to make the world.

3. He wants to make the world as good as possible, and he wants to make the world as much like himself as possible. If he were not the best thing possible, then he would want the world not be as much like himself, but as much like whatever is better than he. This assured by the facts identified in the Proem, that he is a good maker, chooses a good model, and acts to assure that his creation is as good as possible.

The next point to mention is this: after creating the lesser gods, he returns to his natural state of rest (*Tim.* 42e5-6). Why are we told this? We might think, seeing the Demiurge in action, doing one thing *after* another, that he is no timeless eternal being. The gods, we are told in *Republic* II are first of all never to be shown as the cause of anything evil (379c-380c) and that much is assured for the Demiurge as well (42d3-4, 42e3-4) – but secondly, they are never to be shown to be like ‘sorcerers’, i.e. shape shifters, changing their natures (380d-382e). Any change would be for the worst, and this is especially true of eternal Beings such as the Demiurge. So he should not be shown changing. However, it is permissible for a philosopher king (and only a true ruler such as he) to admit some falsehoods into stories about the gods *if* and only if it serves some proper purpose. Showing the Demiurge in activity permits us to better grasp the ontological and axiological structure of the created world. Indeed, the entire creation myth (with a *beginning*) was said by the early academy to be a kind of instructive device. It is not that the world actually starts at some point, but a creation story isolates the contributions of god by imagining what the world would be like without him (68e-69a).

So reminding us that the Demiurge's actual nature is one of rest, reassures the reader, if he or she had any doubt, that this is not an entity subject to change.

In the next few sections, I will discuss appearances of the Demiurge and/or the Form of the Good in other dialogues. The following are lists of key descriptions of the Demiurge and his activities. On the basis of these and the identical or near identical descriptions of the Good in the *Republic* or Cronus/Demiurge in the *Statesman*, we can support the identification of the *Timaeus*' God with the Demiurge of the *Statesman* and the Demiurge/Good of the *Republic*:

Table 6: Descriptions of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*

Description of the Demiurge	Text
The maker and father of the universe...	28c3-4
...is difficult to find, impossible to tell all about	28c4-5
He is the best of causes	29a5-6
He is good and wants to make the world as much like himself as possible	29e1-3
He wants everything to be good, and nothing to be bad so far as it is possible	30a2-3
He is supremely good and does nothing but what is best	30a6-7
He wants to make the world like the best and most perfect of intelligibles	30d1-2
He is the eternal god, whereas the cosmos is the god that will come to be	34a8-b1
He is best of intelligibles and eternal beings (and the World-soul is the best of things begotten by him)	37a1-2
He is father and maker of the gods	41a4-b6
He is not responsible for any evil	42d3-4, e3-4.
His natural state to abide unchanging	42e5-6

Table 7: Descriptions of the Demiurge's Activities in the *Timaeus*:

Description of the Demiurge	Text
He looked at an intelligible model to craft the world	29a4-b1
He brought the world from a state of disorder into order	30a3-6
He put intelligence into soul and soul into body	30b4-5
He made the world (as/in imitation of) a complete, whole living thing	30c2-31a1; 92c7-9
He made the world's soul	34b10ff
He made the cosmos as much like the perfect and intelligible living thing as possible	39d8-e2
He makes the created gods immortal by his will	41a8-b6
Overcomes necessity	47e3ff, 68e-69a,c
Creates the elements of the so-called "elemental" bodies	53b

§2. Comparable Treatment of the Demiurge in the *Statesman*

The King-God in the *Statesman*'s myth of the Age of Cronus is identifiable with the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*. In their dialectical effort to identify the nature of the

statesman, the Eleatic stranger and the younger Socrates find it necessary to distinguish statesmen from other kinds of rulers that might at first be mistaken for them. One that is in the running, as it were, is the King, but as we are told at 266d1, the King would look ridiculous running along with his herd. This idea of a King running alongside those he rules is explicitly picked up in 271e, and implicitly it fills the myth of the age of Cronus, where, by seeing what it is like when god takes a direct hand in moving the world, we get an illustration of what true kingship is like. Let us summarize the account of god's work that is found in it, and then analyze it.

The myth suggests that the universe has two cyclical phases. One is the Age of Zeus, in which we now live. Human beings must rule themselves, remembering as best we can the wisdom that the gods gave us ages ago. As time passes, the universe's motions decay in their quality and perfection. Eventually, like a clock being rewound, the world's creator returns and turns back the world from its errant path. Time flows backwards and he places lesser gods and spirits in direct control of all living beings including humans (271d-e). This is the golden age of Cronus.

What the myth specifically tells us is that “the god himself” (αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς) sometimes conducts (συμποδηγεί) this world (τὸ γὰρ πᾶν τόδε) with it being conveyed (πορευόμενον)¹⁴⁵ and taken in a circle (συγκυκλεῖ) (269c5). After going in its typical direction for hundreds of thousands of cycles, god turns it back the other way in order to correct for its gradual straying from its proper course. During this period “its maker renews its life and replenishes its store of immortality (270a).”

¹⁴⁵ This no doubt looks back to 266d1, where it is said that the King would not πεπορευμένος run along – with his own flock.

The reason that the cosmos periodically requires correction is that it has a body, and thus is imperfect. That which we call heavens and cosmos (οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον), whatever other, numerous blessings (πολλῶν...μακαρίων) it was given (μετέιληφεν) by its progenitor (γεννήσαντος), still shares in body (κεκοινώνηκέ γε σώματος) (269d9-e1).¹⁴⁶ However, 269d5-7 tells us that: only the most divine of all things (τοῖς πάντων θειοτάτοις...μόνοις) are always the same and hold to themselves (Τὸ κατὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν), while the nature of bodies (σώματος δὲ φύσις) is not of the same rank.

Initially the universe runs well on its own. “It had the power and responsibility for itself and all its parts, and did its best to remember the injunctions it had been given by its father and maker. At first it carried out his commands quite exactly, but later – due to the fact that at least some of its components were corporeal– some precision was lost (273b).”

The reason that the corporeal will gradually stray from its proper course and deteriorate is that there is primordial disorderly motion in the universe: “before attaining its current ordered form as the cosmos, corporeality [*sōmatoeides* – σωματοειδές] (which is a primordial and inherent aspect of the universe) was steeped in a great deal of disorder (273b).” But just as in the *Timaeus*, from a state of complete disorder, the Demiurge makes an orderly world, “The point is that all the good there is in the universe stems from the constructor of the universe, whereas the cruelty and injustice...stem from the disorderly condition it used to be in (273b-c)” God vanquishes disorder when he takes

¹⁴⁶ “πολλῶν...μακαρίων must at least include life (ζῆον) and reason (φρόνησιν) for the progenitor (γεννήσαντος) is to be identified with the original binder (τοῦ συναρμόσαντος... κατ’ ἀρχάς). This is made clear by the choice of verb at d9, μετέιληφεν, which recalls εἰληχός at d1.

direct control of the world. But when the world is left to its own devices chaos slowly gains the upper hand.

“In the period immediately following this release, the universe continues to keep everything going excellently, but as time goes by it forgets his injunctions more and more. Then that primeval disharmony gains the upper hand and, towards the end of this period, the universe runs riot and implants a blend of little good and plenty of the opposite [in the creatures it maintains], until it comes close to destroying itself and everything in it (273c-d).”

Nevertheless the universe that the god created will not perish. He restores its life and immortality each time he takes hold of it. And he prevents it from drowning in a sea of dissimilarity. When he does so, he restores its immortality as well (*Pol.* 273e2-4).

So this is like the *Timaeus* in almost all major ontological respects, with the Demiurge as the cause of good in a physical universe that without him was and again would be chaos. The major difference is that in the *Timaeus*, once creation begins, the Demiurge does not need to periodically reset it. He has placed unbreakable mathematical bonds within it, which nothing can undo except himself. A survey of the epithets used to describe Cronos will seal the case for identification

Table 8: Descriptions of the Demiurge in the *Statesman*

The god, himself αὐτὸς ὁ θεός [θεὸς...αὐτός]	269c5 [271e5]
The one who originally bound it [the world] together τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτὸ κατ' ἀρχάς	269d1-2
Its progenitor - τοῦ γεννήσαντος	269d9
The Leader/Driver of all moved things - τῷ τῶν κινουμένων αὖ πάντων ἡγουμένῳ	269e6
(by a) divine cause other than [the cosmos] - ὑπ' ἄλλης...θείας αἰτίας	270a3-4
The Craftsman - τοῦ δημιουργοῦ	270a5
(of) Cronus - Κρόνου	271c4
The Steersman of the universe - τοῦ παντὸς ὁ μὲν κυβερνήτης	272e3-4
The Steersman ...τοῦ κυβερνητοῦ	273c3
(for) the greatest divinity/spirit - τῷ μεγίστῳ δαίμονι	272e7
(from) [the world's] father and craftsman - τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς	273b1-2
(from its) constructor - τοῦ συνθέντος	273b7
The helmsman	273c

the god who ordered the cosmos – θεὸς ὁ κοσμήσας αὐτόν	273d4
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And one particularly important statement about him:

(The world) has acquired all (of its) good things from the constructor, but as many hardships and wrongs there have been in the firmament it has from its prior state (i.e. the disorderly motion of its bodily element).	273b7-c1
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One of these epithets, “the divine cause” at 270a4, if brought to bear on the material in the *Timaeus*, sheds some light thereon. We saw that the Demiurge is at one point called the best of causes (29a) and at another point the best of intelligible and eternal things (37a). Given the *Statesman*’s characterization of the most divine things (and only the most divine things) as forever remaining unchanging and self-identical (269d), and given the fact that this is an essential feature of being an intelligible Being, it should follow that the cosmos’ divine cause is also an intelligible cause, thus uniting the two powerful descriptions of the Craftsman.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, all the *good* that is in the world is on account of him.

This list should leave no doubt that the Demiurge – so called in both dialogues – is the same. He is the begetter and constructor of the universe. Its father and the one who brings it into being. Nor is it the epithets alone on which we can rest such an identification. At 273b there is a cosmological explanation of disorder that is very close to the *Timaeus*, i.e. the chaos of pre-creation and the disorderly motion in the receptacle, which, though not a body, is the substratum that bodies occupy.

I have discussed this so far for three reasons. The first is to solidify the idea that the Demiurge or whatever he represents play a very important role in Plato’s late metaphysics, theology, and cosmology. If he were only in the *Timaeus* the case would be

¹⁴⁷ It is maybe worth noting that the *Statesman* uses αἰτία while the *Timaeus* uses at 29a6 αἰτίων, which could be the genitive plural of either αἴτιον or αἰτία.

harder to make that he is any one thing in Plato's ontology. But given that he plays quite the same role – albeit in a myth with a very different choice of how to present time – it becomes more reckless to dispense with him as a fiction. Additional references can be shown to occur even in the *Laws*, with a complementary myth of Cronus in book IV 713b-e, a subtle distinction between the supreme god and the cosmos in book VII at 821a and a figure compared to a δημιουργός (903c-d) just after the second theological argument in Book X, who is responsible, like the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* and the *Statesman* for making body and soul indestructible, *even though they are generated, not eternal* (904a-b).

The second reason was to supply further evidence suggesting that he is an eternal being, a Form, and likely the Form of the Good. We found this in the language describing the most divine things as those that are unchanging, and the Demiurge/Cronus as the cause of all the good that there is in the created universe.

The last reason is that when we understand his creation, the cosmos, as it functions in the myth, we will see that the Demiurge is differentiated from the World-soul, which is here but not explicitly mentioned. The reason that the universe (also called the heavens) goes in the other direction once god lets go of it is that “it was allotted (εἰληχὸς) life (ζῶον) and reason (φρόνησιν) from the one who originally bound it together (τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτὸ κατ’ ἀρχάς) (269d1-2).”¹⁴⁸ That is to say that the universe is capable of moving itself, and it does its best for as long as possible to remember the guidance it was given by its father and maker (273b).

¹⁴⁸ Συναρμάζω also occurs at *Tim.* 32b3 where it is the binding between ratios.

Now, mention of the World-soul is strikingly absent from this passage; it is only referred to explicitly in the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*. However, the World-soul does seem to be strongly implicated here in the self-motion of the cosmos. As we discussed in the section on the *Sophist* in chapter 4, the Eleatic stranger declares in the *Statesman*'s companion dialogue that anything that has intelligence and life can only have them by having a soul. So it follows from the *Sophist* 249a4-8 that the cosmos, here in the *Statesman*, has a soul as well. This must be why it can move the other way, for if it lacked life, i.e. self-motion, it would not change its direction, it would continue in the direction that the god was moving it by inertia. Nor would this new motion be orderly and circular, but for the fact the cosmos possesses reason.

There is no suggestion that god himself is a soul or the soul of the world, although there seems to be one in the recent Cambridge translation by Waterfield (ed. Annas and Waterfield). He translates 269e5-6, αὐτὸ δὲ ἑαυτὸ στρέφειν ἀεὶ σχεδὸν οὐδενὶ δυνατὸν πλὴν τῷ τῶν κινουμένων αὐτῷ πάντων ἡγουμένῳ, as “There is nothing which is always the source of its own motion, except perhaps the initiator of all motion...” If the passage did say that, then it would instantly suggest to its readers the soul, given its treatment in the *Phaedrus* (245c5-246a2). It is significant, though, that we are not discussing eternal self-motion, but the power to always *turn* oneself. It should be rendered, “There is nothing which is always capable of turning itself, except perhaps the leader/conductor of all things that are moved.” And that possibility is itself rejected as blasphemous in 269e (see premise 3 below).

Then the Eleatic Stranger gives an argument which he uses to establish what he had heretofore been assuming, i.e. that the god moves the cosmos one way and that the

cosmos moves itself another way. Three rival possibilities are ruled out before that, though. The premises for his argument are laid out in 269e1-7. Premises (1)-(3) are in the text, but premise [4] is implicit, garnered from what Plato commits himself to elsewhere in earlier and later works, and postulated here for the sake of explaining the grounds on which the third rival view is rejected.

Premises of the argument 269e1-7

- (1) It has its power to revolve counter-wise in order that it have smallest possible alteration of its previous motion [It can be turned back by god] – Otherwise it undergoes a single, stable form of motion
- (2) Nothing is always able to turn itself except the leader of all things that are moved (αὐτὸ δὲ ἑαυτὸ στρέφειν ἀεὶ σχεδὸν οὐδενὶ δυνατὸν πλὴν τῷ τῶν κινουμένων αὐτῶν πάντων ἡγουμένῳ),
- (3) it is not permitted (blasphemous) [to say] that it [the leader] (τούτῳ) moves sometimes in one way, and at other times in the opposite way.
- [4] [It is blasphemous to claim that the god(s) fight amongst themselves or do anything other than what is best]

Now let us consider the three rival cosmological accounts of the forwards and backwards motion of the cosmos, schemes A-C, and the one that Socrates and the Visitor select, D:

Table 9: Theological Accounts of the Reversing Cosmic Cycles in the *Statesman*

Scheme	God	Cosmos	Evaluation: Grounds
A		← →	NO: (2) [but (3) <i>if</i> the cosmos were god]
B	← →		NO: (3)
C	← ₁ ₂ →		NO: Cosmos must partly move itself (1), maybe [4]
D	←	→	YES

← = Moves the cosmos one way

→ = moves the cosmos the opposite way

Conclusions are then drawn at 269e7-270a4. The following are the rejected schemes, and the italicized writing below them is my reconstruction of the reasons for which they are rejected on the basis of the premises:

(A) That the cosmos always turns itself 269e8-9

Since nothing can always turn itself except the leader of all things that are moved (2)

(B) That the whole thing (ὅλον) is turned by god (ὑπὸ θεοῦ) in two, opposite ways
269e9-270a1

Since it is a blasphemy to say that the leader... moves things, then oppositely (3)

(C) That there are two gods who think to move it opposite of one another 270a1-2

Since this implies the world does not move in the same way as much as possible (1)¹⁴⁹

The scheme that is presented as an alternative is:

(D) At times it is conducted by a godly cause, at others it moves itself the other way
270a3-9

For it cannot always turn itself (although its director could), and if god moved it so, it would be the least necessary alteration of its motion, and it would not require god [or it] to move self-contrarily. It is the only remaining option.

With scheme D endorsed, further description of the period when god moves the cosmos is given at 270a4-9. They are first of all referred to as “those times the cosmos is conducted by another, godly cause, (ὑπ’ ἄλλης συμποδηγείσθαι θείας αἰτίας) (270a3-4).” When this happens the cosmos acquires life once more (τὸ ζῆν πάλιν ἐπικτώμενον) and gets a restored immortality (λαμβάνοντα ἀθανασίαν ἐπισκευαστήν) from the **Craftsman (παρὰ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ)**. Recall that in the Timaeus, it was the Demiurge

¹⁴⁹ It might also imply that the god might move oppositely, if two gods do so, for to say that the gods fight is to say that one or more of them does anything other than the most good – if one motion of god is most good, an opposite one would be worse. From [4], the gods do no wrong/never fight, either (3) or (C), i.e. two gods would not be opposite movers, follows.

too who is responsible for maintaining or preserving the immortality of the created gods (42e)

1. This is the same figure as the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*.
2. He is responsible for all that is good in the world – this suggests he is goodness (or at least its proximate agent or liaison in creating the world).
3. He is the steersman – this terminology directly hearkens back to Presocratic theories, we should expect that either the Good or *nous* will be discussed as steering the world. In the *Phaedo* the good is αἰτία (99c), and here the Demiurge is the divine αἰτία. Plato can speak of νοῦς steering the world as well, (e.g. *Philebus* 28d) but here in the Cronus myth that is represented by the cosmos' φρόνησις. Plato ultimately has two steersman – a creator and a steward-maintainer, the Demiurge is the former the World-soul the latter.

§III. The Demiurge and Form of the Good in the *Republic*

1. *The Craftsman of Sight and being Seen in *Republic* VI*

In this section I will discuss evidence that bears on the Demiurge as the good from the *Republic*. The first occurrence of “δημιουργός” in the *Republic* with theological connotations is at 507c5-6. Socrates asks Glaucon if he has thought about how utterly lavishly (πολυτελεστάτην) the craftsman of perceiving¹⁵⁰ (τὸν τῶν αἰσθήσεων δημιουργόν) crafted the power to see and be seen. He asks this to introduce the analogy of the sun, which will segue into the allegory of the cave. The powers to see and to be seen are not contingently related. They are bound together by light, which is necessary for the viewer to perceive the visible or for the visible to be seen by viewer

¹⁵⁰ Αἰσθήσεων could mean ‘perceivings’ or types of perception, but it might also mean sense impressions or appearances, as at *Phaedrus* 111b “αἰσθήσεις θεῶν”. LSJ.

(507e6-508a1). Among the gods of the heavens it is the Sun (ἥλιος) who is in charge (κύριον) of light.

The sun, and light itself, are analogs, though, for the Good itself, and the knowledge that it makes possible. It is possible to see the sun *because it is the cause of vision*, and likewise it is possible to comprehend the Good *because it is the cause of understanding*.

The craftsman of our sight, then, is really the sun, and this integrates well with the account of vision in the *Timaeus*, which not only agrees with this passage in terms of its like knows like view of the eye emitting light, but which also has one or more of the created gods being responsible for human sense perception. So if the sun is the craftsman of sight, and the sun, in both passages is a god and offspring of another kind of creator, then it could be that the Good is also a craftsman of sorts.

2. *The Good: Father of the Sun, King of the Intelligible World, Best of the things that Are*

In chapter 4, I discussed the sun analogy, showing how it gave evidence of the immanence of intellect principle. I now wish to indicate three other key points from this passage that are lynchpins in the case for identifying the Demiurge with the Form of the Good. The first is this: Socrates calls the sun, a god in the heavens, the ‘progeny’ or ‘child’ of the Form of the Good. Glaucon refers to the Good as the Sun’s “Father”, and Socrates accepts this usage, repeating that the sun is his offspring (506e-507a; 508b-c). Thus we have the Form of the Good referred to as the father of a god (and the best of the gods in the created world, since the sun, here, is treated as the best and causally most indispensable entity within the sensible world. But who is it in the *Timaeus* who can refer even to other gods as their Father and Maker (37a1-2)? And who, in the *Statesman* is

called the world's progenitor (269d9) its Craftsman (270a5), the Father and Craftsman of the universe (273b1-2), and the god who ordered the cosmos (273d4)? The Demiurge, of course. Hence there is enormous significance in the line with which the Demiurge begins his speech to his progeny, "[Listen] Gods! Of Gods I am the Father and of Works I am the Craftsman, and what is generated by me is indissoluble unless I will it so."

Second, the Form of the Good is said to be the sovereign (kingly) ruler over the intelligibles and intelligible realm, just as the sun is over the visible world. The term used is '*basileuein*' – to rule as King. This shows that the Form of the Good is also party to the language of royalty, just as the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*. I take this to only further strengthen the philological and thematic ties between the two.

Lastly, after the sun analogy and the divided line, at the very end of the discussion of the philosopher's ascent from the cave and his education, he finally gains knowledge of the Forms through dialectic with reason and without the senses (532a5ff). Then at last he reaches his ultimate goal, and by grasping what Good itself is, he "reaches the end of the intelligible realm (532b1-2)." And the explanation and justification of this long journey is given again when Socrates says, "all this practice of the crafts we mentioned has the power to lead the best part of the soul upward to a vision of the best among the things that are (πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀρίστου ἐν τοῖς οὐσι θεῶν), just as before the clearest thing in the body was led to the brightest thing in the bodily and visible world (532c3-d1)."

Up until now, I have been inferring that by being the 'best of intelligibles and eternal beings (*Tim.* 37a1-2)' the Demiurge was the Form of the Good. In other words I was assuming, not unreasonably, that the very best Form would be the Form of the Good.

But I need no longer consider it an assumption. For as we just saw, the Form of the Good is literally called “the best of the things that are (532c5-6),” where ‘things that are’ clearly means the Forms given the contrast to the world (τόπω) of corporeal and visible things. And while it is not called best of the intelligibles it is that which we reach a vision of with the best part of the soul (and not the senses). Above in the passage where one grasps what the Good itself is, one grasps it is with thought itself “αὐτῇ νοήσει λάβῃ (532b1)”, and thereby one reaches “the end of the intelligibles “τῷ τοῦ νοητοῦ τέλει (532b2).” So it is fair to call the Form of the Good the climax or the best of the things that are AND of the intelligibles.

So we need nor regard the identification of the Demiurge’s epithets with descriptions of the Form of the Good as an uncertain inference. The Demiurge and the Form of the Good are both given the titles of the best of intelligibles and the best of [eternal] beings.

3. *The Craftsman of the Heavens in Republic VII*

Another passage in the *Republic* to use “δημιουργός” in a way that is entirely suggestive of the *Timaeus*’ god, is at 530a1-b4. The claim that Socrates proposes here and that Glaucon accepts, is that the true astronomer upon studying the heavens will think that a craftsman has arranged them so that they and all things within them are as beautiful as possible. This same astronomer will also find it bizarre to believe that these bodies could be mathematically pure. Of course they never will be as pure as abstract numbers, but he must suppose that they have a divine craftsman, for they seem far too amenable to mathematics than one would expect anything created to be.

The text describing what the Craftsman does with respect to the stars and their contents reads “οὕτω συνεστάναι τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ δημιουργῷ αὐτόν τε καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ” (530a6) The word choice itself is quite telling, for the συνιστήμι + οὐρανόν / τὸ πᾶν is a formula used repeatedly in the *Timaeus* to describe the Demiurge’s act of creation, e.g. “συνέδησαν καὶ συνεστήσατο οὐρανὸν ὁρατὸν καὶ ἀπτόν” (32b) and “ἔπειτ’ ἐκ τούτων [sc. στοιχείων] πᾶν τόδε συνεστήσατο” (69c).

Of the noteworthy uses of “δημιουργός” in the *Republic*, this one is the least ambiguous with respect to its relation to the *Timaeus*’ Demiurge. I am hardly the first to recognize this, either. For instance, in his commentary on the *Republic*, James Adam glossed τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ δημιουργῷ simply with, “the Demiourgos of the *Timaeus*”.¹⁵¹

§IV. Hypothetico-deductive arguments that the Demiurge is the Form of the Good

1. *Who or what could be the Best of the Forms and the Cause of Being?*

For arguments’ sake, let us hold the descriptions of the Form of the Good from books VI and VII of the *Republic* constant, and look to the *Timaeus* to see if we can find any continuity. Since the *Timaeus* establishes itself as a successor dialogue to the *Republic* building upon it, we have as good a reason as we ever have for tentatively expecting consistency rather than inconsistency between these two dialogues. The *Timaeus-Critias*’ backwards-looking self-association with the *Republic* is rarely thought to mark the continuation of a program that Plato already knew himself to be undertaking when he composed his dialogue on justice. The relationship seems to have been constructed *ex post facto*, for the *Republic* neither mentions the plans of Critias, Timaeus, and Hermocrates, nor does it seem to strongly anticipate the *Timaeus*. However, there is

¹⁵¹ Adam [1902] 130.

this at least this much prolepsis to the *Timaeus*: book 10 raises the question of whether or not all the parts of the soul are immortal that the *Timaeus* answers, and *Republic* book VII, we see, introduces the Demiurge. Our point, though, is not to say that the *Republic* was a preparation for the *Timaeus*, only that the *Timaeus* seems to have an interest looking back to establish continuity with the *Republic*.

So if we turn to the *Timaeus* and ask if anything in its ontological scheme corresponds to the best of intelligibles and the best of beings (but also who is the cause of intelligibles and the possibility of their intelligibility), then Demiurge is the best candidate. Alternatively, go the other way, reasoning from the *Timaeus* to the *Republic*, without assuming *a priori* their compatibility. The Demiurge is the Best of Causes and the Best of Intelligibles. Now I ask: which thing in *any* of Plato's other dialogues, is the Best, the most Good, and, moreover, the best and most good of the Forms? Which would most deserve to be honored as the Best of causes? If we take the cause's own goodness and the perfection of its products as our criteria, then the winner is obvious. Surely nothing can be a better cause than the cause of Being and knowledge, which, furthermore, is Goodness itself. So if the *Timaeus*' Demiurge is the best of intelligibles and of beings and of causes, but he is not the Good, then contrary to all appearances, Plato must not have wanted the *Timaeus* to accord in a basic way with the *Republic*. But to suppose that, on the grounds that Demiurge just cannot be the Form of the Good, is to beg the question against my interpretation. It also ignores the fact that the Demiurge is in Book VII of the *Republic* putting together the heavens. In doing so, does he not arrange the motions of the sun, just as the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* does? Yet what was the sun's progenitor and cause in *Republic* VI? The Form of the Good, of course.

2. *The Good is not Noûs*

If the Demiurge is not Noûs, a point which I emphasized in the previous chapter, and if he is the Good, as I am now claiming, then we should expect that the Good be distinct from Noûs as well. The sun passage in *Republic* VI makes it quite clear that the Good is not Noûs; it makes knowledge possible, and because it is the cause of knowledge it can be grasped as an intelligible object of knowledge, (508e1-4) but it is neither the part of the soul that obtains intelligible knowledge nor the truthfulness that illuminates intelligibles.

This point is established by analogy to the role of the sun in illuminating sensible objects for sense perception and belief. Socrates points out to Glaucon that neither sight nor the organ in which it occurs, the eye, are the sun.¹⁵² What the sun is in the visible realm in relation to sight and visible things, the Good is in relation to understanding and intelligible things (508b12-c2.) Following the analogy, the Good is the cause of the soul's ability to comprehend intelligible things without being that comprehension or the soul.

“You must say, then, that what gives truth to the things known and the power to know to the knower is the form of the Good. And as the cause of knowledge and truth, you must think of it as an object of knowledge. Both knowledge and truth are beautiful things, but if you are to think correctly, you must think of the Good as other and more beautiful than they. In the visible realm, light and sight are rightly thought to be sunny, but wrongly thought to be the sun. So, here it is right to think of knowledge and truth as goodly, but wrong to think that either of them is the good – for the good is yet more honored (508e1-509a10).”

Now, this passage does not explicitly state that the Good also is not the soul, i.e. the ‘organ’ in which understanding comes to be. However, from 508c3-508d9 the parallelism

¹⁵² However, at 508b2 it is pointed out that the eye is the sunniest (ἡλιοειδέστατον) of organs. Presumably this is because in Plato's theory of vision the eye must emit its own lesser light to yield vision and/or the eye's natural affinity for the light of the sun, i.e. it is designed to see what the sun illuminates and so we might say that it is the sense that best loves the sun. To see what the analogy between Good/sun would tell us on this point about the part of the soul that grasps the intelligibles, consider the *Phaedo*'s argument that the soul is more akin to intelligibles than sensibles.

between eye and soul is clearly established, and, in conjunction with 508a11-b1, the analogy forthwith establishes that the Good is neither the soul nor its reasoning [part].

I take this to be evidence for my thesis in the form of Consilience. In a hypothetico-deductive manner I ask: what should we expect about the Good in the *Republic* if it were the same as the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* who is *not* Noûs? We would expect to find that the Good is not Noûs. We do find just that, so we should take that as supporting our identification claim. Now, hypothetico-deductive confirmation can never be decisive proof, for it underdetermines any one particular hypothesis that predicts the observed result. Logically, this would be equivalent to affirming the consequent. If A is: 'The Demiurge is the Good', and B is 'The Demiurge is not Noûs', and C is 'The Good is not Noûs', then we can represent our reasoning

as a simple syllogism:

A
and B [or: $A \wedge B \supset C$]
so C

Now, if we obtained $\neg C$, then, by modus tollens, we would infer that: $\neg(A \wedge B)$, which means either $\neg A$, $\neg B$, or $\neg A$ and $\neg B$, i.e. the falsification of one or more of my claims about the Demiurge. However, it would be illicit to affirm C and then infer $A \wedge B$. Something else might ground C.

Very well, my position has not been falsified, but has it been confirmed? To some degree surely it has. After all, we would be remiss if we assumed that there were an infinite number or even more than a small number of plausible reasons for which Plato might have held C. This elect group of positions about the Demiurge stand out against all the many, more numerous others which would be falsified by $\neg C$, and, though the consilience of result C might support all of the surviving views indifferently, we are by no means equipollent between them. For all the many other reasons I have given for thinking that the Demiurge is the Good but not Noûs, that view is the likeliest among the

views that would predict that C. Thus, in the context of my other arguments, this is positive evidence, though not proof positive.

But it is perhaps better to arrange arguments in another way. I have given independent evidence that the Demiurge is not intellect, because he is not a soul, he is an intelligible, and intellect is inherent in soul, and while intellect grasps intelligibles it is not the same as the intelligible. I also have given independent evidence that the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* is the Form of the Good. Now, what has THE chief objection to identifying the Demiurge with the Form of the Good been for the last century? This: the Demiurge cannot be the Good because he is Nous, and Nous is not the Good. Skemp put it eloquently in his 1942 book, where he showed the Demiurge as the Form of the Good interpretation to be the common enemy of Noöntic Transcendentalists and Noöntic Immanentists, insofar as they were agreed on the ΔN :

“Taylor and Cornford differ on so many points that their agreement here is significant. Neither will force Plato’s words on this fundamental question in order to create a symmetry in metaphysics which the dialogues do not warrant. Whether he intended mind to be transcendent or not – at once “outside” and other than the Forms and “above” the ensouled οὐρανός – they dispute: but they agree that νοῦς and ψυχή are not to be confused with and lost in the Form of the Good, still less in the other Forms. But this quarrel has been from the beginning. We are only debating in modern terms the issue between Xenocrates and Crantor on the one side and Plutarch and Atticus on the other (ix-x).”

Now, if I have independently discredited the ΔN thesis, then the single strongest argument against the seeing the Demiurge as the Form of the Good has been nullified. It means, that for (one of?) the first times ever, one can attempt to interpret Plato’s theology without the handicap of the ΔN assumption, and, therefore, finally arrive at an answer that solves the problems I discussed in the previous chapter.

3. *The Demiurge and the Good are both supreme, yet hard to know and to describe*

If the Form of the Good is the cause of intellectual illumination and is itself intelligible, then presumably it should be the most intelligible thing, and in a sense Plato thinks it is so. However, he also thinks that it is difficult to know. He piously and cryptically suggests in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* that the Good and the Demiurge, respectively, are almost too awesome to know or at least to express knowledge about. Why should this be? It seems to undermine the whole reality/intelligibility correlation which he so famously illustrates in *Republic* VI's divided line, to which the sun analogy is the prelude.

As for the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge is, of the intelligibles, uniquely obscure. Anything in Plato's 'place of intelligibles' is difficult to describe. They exist at no time in no place, without any of the qualitative features of sense perception. But the model, for instance, is not left without description;¹⁵³ and neither is the quasi-intelligible world-soul.¹⁵⁴ We are told by *Timaeus*, "it is real work to discover the father and maker, and discovering him he is impossible to describe to everyone (28c3-5)" as a lead up to what little he must try to tell his audience about him at this point: "but we need to go back again investigate this much about him: which of the two models did the maker use when he fashioned the cosmos (28c5-6ff)?" All that we can (initially) infer for sure about the Maker is that he is a good maker, and thus would have used an intelligible model (29a).

¹⁵³ Indeed, I take David Sedley [2007] (among others cf. Parry [1991], Thomas [2003], Thein [2006]; cf. Wood [1968]) to have decisively proven that the model is the Form of the genus 'Animal' or 'Life form'. There are debatable sub-points (e.g. do all the Forms belong or interweave with this Form, should we translate ζῷον as 'living thing' or as 'animal', but these are details; we know what the model basically is.

¹⁵⁴ In fact, Plato is far more forthcoming in the *Timaeus* about soul's intermediate ontological position between being and the becoming of bodies than he is in any other dialogue, including the *Phaedo* and the *Laws*.

As for the Good in the *Republic*, the sun analogy is particularly *illuminating*. The sun, as the fundamental source of light, ought to be the most visible thing. And it is. Nothing is as easy to see as the sun, by which I mean that if one's eyes are strong enough to see anything at all, then they can certainly see the sun. However, so bright is the sun that it overwhelms our eyes. It overwhelms our sense of vision, and so all we can say about its looks is that it appears as a very bright disc. In a scientific sense we can call it a yellow star, but the sun is not really yellow. If one looks at the sun on a clear, bright day, the sun appears not even white but a shiny whitish (?) glow. Our language of colors and shades is fitted to the things illuminated by the sun, and not pure light itself. It is almost as difficult to describe how the sun looks as it is to look at it. That is why, when the philosopher leaves the world of shadows in the cave, and embarks into real sunlight, the sun is the *last* thing he becomes capable of seeing in the world of real bodies (532b).

Analogously, the Good is difficult to know and describe precisely because it *is* more than Being and is truer than Truth. Even if the Good is preeminently knowable, it is still all but impossible to describe it – a ‘hyperontic *thing*’ – in discursive language whose fundamental term for predication, identity, and existence is “to be”. So, it is not surprising that in spite of the general correspondence between greater reality and greater comprehensibility that Book VI and VII assert, the Good, as the pinnacle of all reality, is still a challenging quarry to hunt after.

Whereas it is quite the task to discover him, and discovering him it is impossible to describe him to all, if the Demiurge were the Good we should expect that the Good would likewise be difficult to know and impossible to describe to all (28c3-5). It is reasonably clear in the *Republic* that Socrates believes both the first point, and it is

obvious that he believes the second. It is not only with the denizens of the cave that philosophers will flounder in their attempts to describe the sun, for Socrates cannot maintain complete disclosure (or even decorum) once he begins to tell the noble Glaucon about the Good (509b5-c10).¹⁵⁵

Once again, a consequence implicated by my hypothesis about the identity of the Demiurge has been found to obtain. And, again, I take this as evidence, though not decisive proof, for the thesis that the Demiurge is the Good. For assume what is said about the Form of the Good in the *Republic*, and ask: if the Good were the Demiurge, then what would be expect about Timaeus' capability to describe him or how hard he thinks it is to know about him? Or, to go in the opposite direction, assume what is about the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* and ask what would expect to be the case about the describability and knowability of the Form of the Good in the *Republic*, if the Demiurge were the Good?

Here we have another opportunity to frame a hypothetico-deductive argument, or to strengthen my identification of the Demiurge with the Good through consilience. Timaeus tells Socrates and the others that the Father and Maker is difficult to know, but he does not tell them why. In so far as we wish to understand Plato's theological thought, we should wonder why the nature of the Demiurge is such a challenging subject. Therefore, the fact of his relative inscrutability is for us an explanandum. If a plausible thesis serves as a good explanation for this fact, then we have some corresponding reason

¹⁵⁵ Adeimantus' comments about Glaucon in bk. VIII's discussion of Timocratic states and souls may suggest that Plato is presenting his half-brother as lacking a truly philosophical soul, i.e. he is not the ideal audience member for disclosing the Good to. Yet, he is engaging in dialectic so that his support of justice's inherent goodness is knowledge and not merely true opinion. In any event, given his youth and lack of years of training in philosophy, he would be a non-ideal listener to the gospel of the Good, regardless of his level of innate philosophical potential. Nevertheless, he is surely a good enough candidate to suggest that that it is very hard to convey such knowledge to others, which is certainly the point of the exchange at 508c1-11.

to adopt it. As with all hypothetico-deductive reasoning, this is a defeasible reason, which is not decisive; but it also becomes stronger and stronger evidence to the extent that all the other putative explanantia are less probable in themselves or less convincing in accounting for the explanandum.

There are other reasons for supposing that the Demiurge is hard to know. Some of them are compatible with or even complimentary of the explanans above. Still, a good explanation for our explanandum, which is left unexplained in the *Timaeus*, is ready to hand in the *Republic*'s sun analogy, *provided* that we endorse the identification of the Demiurge with the Good.

Some commentators quite reasonably take Timaeus' claim about the inscrutability of the Demiurge to be a reason against trying to find any consistent and wholly satisfying interpretation of the Demiurge figure. Here Plato is telling us that the question of who the Demiurge is will be difficult if not impossible to answer; why think then that there could or should ever be a convincing answer to be found?

This is a very serious question, which any commentator brave or foolhardy enough to attempt to name Plato's god must answer. My answer in the introduction was, "let's try and see", but now I wish to go on the counter-offensive, or, rather, I have already implicitly done so in my second argument of consilience, and now I will make it explicit. The objector takes Timaeus' statement and asks me, 'why should you now seek a clear role for the Demiurge to occupy?' To that I respond, "Timaeus' warning is itself evidence for determining the Demiurge's identity!"

My argument here is this: two statements each suggesting the difficulty of knowing and expressing the nature of something supreme in Plato's system, are actually a

clue to that nature when we realize that it is only those two things that in virtue of being so good, and so high up the ontological scale, become so hard to describe. Because they share in the *exact same mystery*, for the exact same reason, they become that much less inscrutable. In summary: one we reason we can know that the Good is the Demiurge and the Demiurge is the Good is that both are difficult to know for the same reasons. Once known they are the best known thing, but their ontological preeminence makes them last thing to know, and all that one can tell the less initiated about them for sure is that they make the gods, that they are supremely good, and that they cause all good things.¹⁵⁶

§V. *The Good is the One, and the Demiurge creates order like the One*

I wish to offer a further *suggestion* for identifying the Demiurge with the Form of the Good. This suggestion rests on a conception of how the One was meant to operate, metaphysically speaking, in Plato's "*ungeschriebene Prinzipienlehre*," that is his unwritten doctrine of *Prinzipien*, i.e. *archai* - ἀρχαί, or first principles. According to testimony that begins with Aristotle and some of his students, Plato ultimately accounted for everything that exists, from the Forms to the lowliest of images, by reference to the interaction between two fundamental principles: The One, which was equivalent to the Form of the Good, and the Indefinite Dyad, which he also called "the great and the small."¹⁵⁷ The One was meant to supply order or Form, while the Indefinite Dyad provided the material on which the One operated (*Phys.* 187a17-20, 203a5ff) In one sense the indefinite is matter or space, upon which the Forms and derivative kinds of

¹⁵⁶ Wolfson pointed out in [1947] that both the Demiurge and the Form of the Good are described as being difficult to know, and both have a superior metaphysical status (233-241). And while this is correct and was a valuable contribution, not believing that they could be the same, he failed to recognize that this is in fact a clue.

¹⁵⁷ Krämer [1959], [1974], [1990], [1996]; Gaiser [1962], [1980]; Dooley [1989]; Miller [1995]; Berti [2003]; Shields [2009].

mathematical order are imposed, e.g. the triangles that make the elements or the harmonies that make the soul (*Phys.* 209b10ff.)

According to the testimonia, the one operates on the indefinite dyad, producing unities within plurality. This process operates even at the level of Forms, for everything except the One of the Form of the Good is a composite of unity and plurality or limit and the unlimited. However, the process of applying unity onto plurality is recursive, and so it leads to an “emanation” of unity and harmony out of the One and down into the unlimited. This recursive or successive unfolding might be observed in the generation of unlimited number (which is also limited) in the second deduction of the *Parmenides* (*Parm.* 143d1-144a9).

To fully investigate the possible significance of the identification of the One with the Good, and thus, on my view, with the Demiurge, we would have to venture considerably farther afield from Plato’s dialogues than we have strayed thus far. So rather than endeavoring to begin what would be an entirely separate line of investigation so close to the end of the work, I will offer one very limited suggestion.

The Form of the Good in the *Republic* is responsible for the Being and the intelligibility of all the Forms. It stands at the pinnacle of Plato’s ontological scale, and from it, all truth, goodness, and being radiate out. Just as the eye receives overflowing light from the sun, so too the soul and the universe as such receives the overflow or “emanation” of the One (*R.* 508b6-7). Like the sun, it “overflows”, thereby producing the order in the universe. The Form of the Good is responsible for maintaining the Being of even the Forms. The Demiurge is likewise responsible for metaphysically sustaining crucial, divine things. While he is not described as giving being and intelligibility to the

Forms, he does make the immortal soul, and gives it the structure it needs in order to apprehend the Forms, just like the Good must do. Furthermore, as we saw from chapter 2 to this chapter, the Demiurge is responsible in several dialogues for maintaining the indestructibility of things that have come to be and are not eternal. If it were not for the order, particularly the binding mathematical structure that Demiurge places and, on a P-reading, continuously renews in his creations, they would fall apart, and the soul would remain immortal, nor would the heavens continue their endless dance throughout the cosmos.

My suggestion is this: the various mathematical inputs that we see the Demiurge give to the world, from the geometrical structures that create stable bodies, to the harmonies that make the soul immortal, are a representation of the mathematical unifying or emanating of order/limit into the unlimited that the Good or the One is supposed to be responsible for. This, furthermore, is what it means for the Demiurge to be the cause of everything good that is in the world, while the receptacle or corporeality or simply “the unlimited” is that source of difference, plurality, and indeterminacy that brings things apart.

At the moment, this remains a suggestion. A thorough collation of all the Demiurge’s mathematical activities compared side-by-side to the reports of Aristotle, Aristoxenus and Theophrastus, as well as fragments from Speusippus and Xenocrates, at the very least, would be required to give real substance to an account of this mathematically generative or regenerative activity and its details. It seems that there is enough reason to believe, given my arguments, that this is at least an avenue of inquiry worth going down. The parallel roles of the maintaining the immortality to the world/ the

gods, including the sun, and of giving being to the Forms (in the case of the Good in *Rep.* VI) seem the most suggestive points and the most promising leads on gaining a better purchase on those parts of the “unwritten” doctrines that were written, albeit without their intentions made pellucid to the uninitiated.

§VI. The Demiurge and his Model are Distinct

1. *A Problem: is the Demiurge his model, the Intelligible Life Form?*

There is one final argument that the Demiurge is the good, but it is an argument that can potentially lead to a very serious problem with the thesis that the Demiurge is the Good. It is a very simple textual argument from the *Timaeus*, can run as follows: the demiurge wants the cosmos to be as good as possible and not at all bad (*Tim.* 30a2-3). The Demiurge also desires the created world to be as much like him as possible (*Tim.* 29e2-3). It should follow that the Demiurge himself would be the good, and indeed he is the supremely good and so that it is blasphemous to say that he does anything but what is most beautiful (30a6-7); he is the best of causes (29a5-6); and the best of intelligible and eternal beings (37a1-2). So it seems a straightforward argument. He wants the world to be as good as possible, he wants the world to be as much like himself as possible, and all is well, because he is goodness.

However, the Demiurge also is said to want to make the world as much like what is the most beautiful and in every complete of the intellected (νοουμένων) (30d1-3), and this, the context makes clear, is the intelligible Life Form (or Form of the Living Being) (νοητὸν ζῶον) that contains within it all other intelligible Life Forms (νοητὰ ζῶα). It is this complete Form of the Living Being that will be the intelligible model he uses for making the cosmos.

Does this now mean that the Form of the Living thing is the Demiurge if he wants to make the world as much like *himself* as possible and as much like *it* as possible, too? Or, does it mean that he is still the Form of the Good, but that the Form of the Good is somehow equivalent to the Form of the Living thing? Or, does this simply show us that we have been over reading these passages to the point of contradiction? I will argue that these passages are mutually consistent and not over read.

2. *The Model is the Form of the Living-Being*

For various reasons, all of which are quite complicated, there has been some controversy over the identity of the Model to which the Demiurge looks, independent of whatever he is and whatever relationship that holds between them. Some regard the model just to be the Form of the Living-Thing, the “narrow” reading of the model, to which I subscribe. Another view is that the model must be all the Forms, for otherwise the sensible world would not have features imitative of all the Forms. That is the “wide” reading of the model. For now, I will just take it for granted that the Model to which the Demiurge looks is the Form of the Living thing, in the straightforward or simplest way that the text can be read, but I will say this much in defense of the narrow reading (or against any necessity for falling back on a wide reading). Based on a distinction from Plato’s *Sophist* between *per se* and *per aliud* predication, I think that it can be shown that the model can just be the Form of the Living thing, not ‘containing’ *per se* all the other Forms, but relating to them *per aliud* (i.e. not as identity or genus-species, but by predication), and thereby its replica in the created world can also display all the features that are reflections of all the Forms. For instance, the Form of Beauty is reflected into the Receptacle, since there are many apparently beautiful things, and the cosmos as a whole

is the most beautiful thing that comes to be. The Model, therefore, should presumably be beautiful, and that not only means that it should be an intelligible model, but that somehow the Form of Beauty must interact or interweave with it. However, it would suffice if there were *per aliud* connections between the Form of the Living Thing, which is the model proper, and the Form of Beauty, which is not part of the model proper, or *per se*, but is predicated of the Model through the interweaving of Beauty and Living Thing, so that the created living world will have a beautiful appearance as well. All that the Model should contain within it *per se*, is all the species forms of various living things which belong to the genus of 'life form' or 'living thing.'

3. *How the best Model for making the world good can be the Living-Being*

But I digress. We return to the dilemma of the Maker and the Model, and the fear that they might collapse into one another. This is a serious problem for two reasons. As mentioned, it destroys the distinction between Maker and Model. The other reason is that if the Form of the Living thing should be equivalent to the Form of the Good, then we would have a contradiction with the account of the Good in *Republic VI*, where *all* the other Forms depend for their being and intelligibility on the Form of the Good. But if the Living thing and the Good were equivalent, then the former could not be said to depend for its being on the latter.

To tackle the problem, let us first ask this: why is the Form of the Living Thing a good Form to be chosen as the model for the created world? Are there specific facts about the created world (e.g. that it is in space) that recommend this Form and not another to be the Demiurge's model? I believe that the answer is distinctly affirmative, and in offering my account, we will take the first step towards separating the Maker and Model.

The world will be most like the Good if it is most like the intelligibles, i.e. as constant and self-same and real as possible (and as knowable as anything that has come-to-be could be ever could be). Time is the moving image of eternity. You cannot make the world sempiternal or “eternal” in the strong sense, but you can make it perpetual in time and in constant motion. That is what the Demiurge does, he makes the heavens with time, in order for the world to be the moving image of eternity.

What does this require? For Plato, the soul is the principle of self-motion. Only a self-mover could be an eternal mover (cf. *Phdr.* 245c6-246a2), and a rational soul is the only kind of orderly self-mover, while only a body under the control or influence of a soul with intellect could be a rationally *moved* non-self-mover. Ergo, the created World needs rational soul(s) to keep it in perpetual, orderly motion. The created world be best able to imitate the qualities of the Good (and derivatively of the other Forms) if it were a self-sufficient, whole living thing, moving regularly. Therefore it should be modeled after the Form of Life to be the most complete and perfect living thing. For then it would be a living thing – i.e. it would be something with a soul, and, indeed as many souls in as many as its parts as possible (i.e. a living whole made up of living parts).

Our world becomes the best that it can be by becoming the best imitation of the intelligibles that anything can the spatiotemporal realm of change and motion could ever be. That best imitation happens to be a maximally rational, perpetual and independent self-mover that is whole. (Rationality and independence are needed so that its motion can turn upon itself constantly without ever requiring lateral motion or a shift in operation).

To be whole it must contain all within itself, and as a self-mover it must be alive. Hence for something that has come-to-be *in a world of motion* to be most like the Good,

it must have intellect and a soul, so it must be most like intelligible Life. Let that be our argument showing the *possibility* that Plato could have reasonably held that a Form other than the Form of the Good, specifically the Form of the Living-Being, would serve best as the Demiurge's model in order to make the created world as *good* as possible.

It is possible. But how would Plato have conceived of the relationship between the model, the Form of the Living-Being, and the Maker, the Form of the Good? And an even more pressing question is this: is there any reason to believe that Plato *actually* thought this way and *actually* had a worked out view on the relationship between the Form of the Living-Being and the Form of the Good?

The answer, surprisingly, is yes.

4. A Solution in the *De Anima*

Aristotle, in the *De Anima*, says that in his “work about philosophy” (meaning, Simplicius tells us, his (in)famous lecture ‘On the Good’ [Simp. *In DA*. 28,5ff]) Plato presented the intelligible Living Thing as the Good/the One **with three dimensions** (*DA* 404b19ff). “[T]he Animal (ζῷον) itself was composed of the Idea of the One, together with primary length, breadth, and depth (*In DA*. 28,10ff.).”

As I discussed at the end of chapter 2, in consideration of the metaphysical accomplishments of the World-soul, and as I argued above, the world can be made a moving image of eternity if it is made in the likeness of a complete Living-Being. Imitating this model makes the world a living thing, and an intelligent living thing, which is the best that can be done to bring a world of motion into resemblance with the intelligible world.

Since this world was made when the pre-existing chaos of the receptacle was brought to order, it is, by necessity, a spatiotemporal realm. Space and change are inherent to the sensible world, just as being unmoving, unchanging, timeless, and non-spatial are the eternal and inherent conditions of the intelligible realm. Now, if the Form of the Good, with three dimensions added to it, is the Form of the Living Thing, and if the receptacle is three-dimensional space, then the Form of the Living Thing would be the appropriate spatial schematism through which to apply the Good to the receptacle. The Demiurge can make the created, spatiotemporal world as much like the Good as possible by making it as much as possible like the Good *under the conditions of being in three dimensions*. Thus, by making the world in the image of the intelligible Living Thing, which is, Aristotle tells us, what Plato thought the Form of the Good + three dimensions is, the Demiurge makes this world as much like the Good as it is possible for a spatial world to be.

Therefore, *the Demiurge is not be identified with his model*; his model is the Form of the Living Thing, while he is the Form of the Good. His model is related to him, though. For it is the Good schematized into the general conditions of what will be in space.

It is important that the Demiurge not be identical to his model, and he is not, but he does not literally “look” at his Model any more than the Form of the Eye “sees” the Form of Light or than the Nose-itself “smells” the Rose-itself. The Forms are, after all, invisible, intangible, and wholly lacking in sensible properties. So we must take as literary embellishments the various statements about the Demiurge’s process of reasoning, or the more anthropomorphic aspects of his good will. However, the choice of

a model, even if it is not “chosen” or “looked at”, must have some philosophical significance, for the Model is used to explain the facts of panpsychism, the uniqueness of the cosmos, and the varieties of living things found in world.

Therefore, I suggest that we understand the Demiurge applying the form of the living as a model to the created world as the unfolding of the Good/ the One, which is pure intelligible unity, into conditions of greater plurality and indefiniteness, specifically the plurality of multiple dimensions of spatial extension. If that is the application, then the Form of the Living Thing itself is the idea of unity applied to formal dimensions and their concomitant, motion/change (the Form of Motion/Change, not actual motion/change). When this model is realized in the actual conditions of actual space, with real change, it yields an actual, complete living thing, namely the World-god.

An emanation-based understanding of Plato’s metaphysics fits the evidence well, and makes it perfectly understandable how the Demiurge can be the Form of the Good while his model is the Form of the Living thing. It also allows us to see how it can be true in the context of the myth that the Demiurge wishes to make the created world as much like himself as possible, as good as possible, as much like the living thing as possible, and as much like the model as possible, without the Good and the Living thing or the Maker and the Model collapsing into one another.

§VII. What is the Purpose of Plato’s Transcendent Theology?

1. *The Binding Power of the Good*

Given the amount of work that the World-soul can do in introducing and sustaining order in the cosmos through its instantiation of *nous* and its control of non-rational bodies, one might well ask what further use Plato has for a god over and above

the World-soul or the other divine souls? The answer I think is threefold. First, we recall once more the Anaxagoras passage in the *Phaedo*. Socrates wanted to use *nous* as a cause to explain the order of the world, but he also wished to find a full explanation for how goodness holds the world together or can be constitutive of the world. The World-soul can grasp at goodness by means of its intellect, and that presupposes that there is some Form of Good antecedent to it. That makes the Idea of the Good necessary for the world's maintenance, but it does not necessarily make the Good *constitutive* of the world's order.

Perhaps if the soul held together bodies by thinking about the Good (and only the Good), then that would suffice? Plato does think that the soul animates living things, it is the primary source of motion. By means of its intellect it preserves world order. But it is not his view that soul is literally responsible for the basic cohesion of "elementary" physical bodies. That is something far closer to the Stoic view that God is directly responsible for the *tonos* that holds together any body. Such a view is more workable for the Stoics than for Plato for two reasons. First, their God is a body and is completely immanent in the world. In fact, their two ἀρχαί just are God, the active principle, and Matter, the passive principle. God pervades matter and gives it its determinations wherever they are needed. Plato's gods, at least his transcendent god(s), cannot 'descend' into space. His immanent gods are souls that can occupy and animate bodies, but they require the Demiurge to first create elementary geometrical structures in order that there be any bodies that are stable enough to interact with or inhabit within the receptacle. For before his intervention, there were but the scantiest, ephemeral traces of bodies, and nothing that we could really identify even as a proper appearance of air or fire or water.

Thus there is a further role for the Demiurge, as a transcendental god, when he is understood as the one and principal source of harmony, orderliness, and cohesion by means of mathematics. He accounts for how bodies, the cosmos as a whole, and even souls, can hold together, and in certain cases for all time, given that they are generated and in the receptacle.

Now, the million dollar question is *how* a transcendent god ‘puts mathematics’ into the world. We can understand why Plato would postulate such a god and supreme cause, but can we truly comprehend what it means for something outside of space and time to introduce mathematical order into a changing space and to thereby create measurable time? That, I fear, is a question for Plato and not for my interpretation, for any reading of Plato (just like any reading of Kant) will have to make sense of how the Forms can be causes, even though they belong outside of space and time and neither change nor descend.

2. The God who is Father and Craftsman of the gods

Secondly, we have need for something above and beyond the psychic gods to account for their existence. While soul can certainly account for various causes of change within the world of becoming, since soul itself is a temporal thing moving and changing, it is not an ontological first cause, even if it is a kinesthetic first cause. This calls out for something over and above soul, to sustain its immortality. This too the Demiurge accomplishes, by being the creator and sustainer of souls, including the souls of the created gods. In looking for something in Plato’s ontology to stand above soul and to be its cause, one would naturally point to the Forms. That is a transcendental cause, but some commentators deny that the Forms can constitute a transcendent *theology*, as was

most famously done by Cornford in *Plato's Cosmology* (99ff). The Demiurge is said to establish the world “as an icon in time for those *everlasting gods*”, and this statement clearly seems to be using “everlasting gods” to refer to the Forms (*Tim.* 37c6-7). Cornford’s claim that nowhere [else] are Forms referred to as gods was begging the question against the more obvious understanding of this passage, that the Forms are gods ([1937] 99-100). What is more, in the *Statesman*, we learn that the most godlike of things are those that are unchanging (*Pol.* 269d5-7). And this again seems to refer to the Forms. Moreover, there is the ample evidence I have given in this chapter that the Demiurge, the god *par excellence* in the *Timaeus* is the best of the Forms. So there does not seem to be hesitation on Plato’s part to refer to the Forms as gods, and, inasmuch as there is a supreme Form, that supreme Form can be god of gods.

3. *The Ultimate Underwriter of Moral Order*

One final reason that Plato would wish to have the Demiurge serve as the god of a transcendent theology is that the Demiurge as the cause of all good things can be a successful anthropomorphic representation of the Form of the Good. The Form of the Good has the following theological/moral role to play: it supplies an ultimate unassailable guarantee to the ethical structure of the world. This Form/God is the ultimate justification for believing that virtue and justice will turn out for the best and that wickedness can never prosper in the long run. If, metaphysically, the Good is the basic principle of all things, then it cannot but be that, despite whatever limitations matter and plurality impose on the world, the greatest power resides in the Good.

Is the demiurge, other than by simply being the Form of the Good and by being responsible for all subsequent beings, ensuring a kind of moral order to the world? The

answer is yes. In the *Laws* X, in a myth after the second theological argument, we learn for the first time about the caretaker for the world. He is distinguishable from all the created gods who, while indestructible, are not completely eternal (*L.* 904a6-b3). It is extremely easy for this Demiurge to ensure that justice is upheld throughout the cosmos by means of a fair system of relocating transmigrating souls to better and worse places in the cosmos depending on the quality of their past lives. This suggests that ultimately the Demiurge is responsible for there being the kind of moral stratification in Plato's cosmos that there is (*L.* 904b3-c4). This system may be maintained by the created gods, and they may be responsible for creating the various bodies or seats that the souls will reside in, but nevertheless the entire intention of the system, its *raison d'être*, is the result of the Demiurge.

So these I suggest are rationales for Plato to have his transcendent theology over and above the immanent one. That the transcendent theology is in some ways designed to account ontologically for the soul and the cosmos in the Platonic system and by means of the Platonic principles, which Plato is not in general eager to discuss with the general public, can be seen even in the style of exposition that transcendent theology has, as against his imminent theology. The imminent theology is presented frequently in quite technical proofs, where premises are laid out and we are taken through point by point. Most of the information we have about the Demiurge is expressed through the form of *muthos*.

I submit that Plato expresses his transcendental theology in the limited and elliptic manner that he does so as to deliberately limit their accessibility to those in a position to actually be concerned with these issues and to be able to comprehend them. That is to say

that those who are Platonists may well understand what is meant by the Demiurge and what problems he is meant to resolve. Those who are not, might be simply entertained or morally enlightened by a myth that can do them no harm and only good. Meanwhile they will be able to learn about the World-soul and *nous*, which may suffice to cure them of atheism, to explain the teleological structure of the world, to make them believe that the gods care, etc.

§VIII. Limitations in Identifying the Demiurge and Objections

I am not the first to have argued that the Demiurge represents the Form of the Good, though it is more common to see the claim made that Plato's "God" is the Form of the Good and for it to be left as a separate issue, or simply unaddressed, whether or not that equates the Form of the Good with the Demiurge as well as god.¹⁵⁸ Two main reasons have been raised against the identification I am making here. First, for the Demiurge considered as the Form of the Good, it has been argued that this cannot be since *nous* is not a Form or at least not the Form of the Good, nor is soul. The argument would run thus:

1. Nous (immanent or transcendent) and Soul are not the Good
2. The Demiurge is Nous (immanent or transcendent) and perhaps also Soul
3. The Demiurge is not the Good

Now I wholeheartedly agree with the major premise of the argument presented here, that is that *nous* or soul are not Forms nor the Good. I disagree with the minor premise, that the Demiurge is intellect and thus the conclusion follows. The strongest contribution to the view that the Demiurge is the Good that I have offered here, aside from systematic

¹⁵⁸ Benitez [1995].

examination of various lines of evidence throughout Plato's Corpus, is to present a way of eliminating the strongest argument against the position that is that the Demiurge is *nous*. And since the thesis that the demiurge represents *nous* has been all but universally accepted by all camps and even since antiquity among diverse groups of middle Platonists, Neo-Platonists, neo-Pythagoreans, etc. this I take it that this is no small point, at least within the study of Plato's theology.

The second objection raised either to identifying the Form of the Good with god, here understood as the Demiurge, or with identifying the Demiurge, qua God, with the Form of the Good is this: the Demiurge in the myth is an active, at times semi-personal, figure. He presents a psychology: he reasons thus and so, he lacks for envy, he wills the immortality of his progeny etc. While the Form of the Good is holy, it is a completely august and separate metaphysical principle. It lacks any kind of personal dimension that one would associate with a creating intellect or with a supreme deity of the Abrahamic traditions.

Now, while the previous argument had to its credit that it was valid and reasonable to believe so long as one accepted, what was all but universally agreed, that the Demiurge is/represents *nous* (ΔN). But the argument that the Demiurge/God cannot be the Good on the basis of the claim that God, for Plato must be personal, is a much stranger, and, to my mind, weaker position altogether. First, it seems to be a bizarre case of selective application of allegorizing, to suppose that phrases such as 'the Demiurge reasoned' actually imply that he is going through a process of thought. On the one hand, those who see the Form of the Good as god seem incorrect to fail to allegorize and remove the literary embellishments, which clearly are just that. No one would believe

that he actually had a mixing bowl, or that he actually cuts as with a knife the bands of the soul. Why then would one accept other anthropomorphisms for an intelligible god? On the other hand, those who insist on the indispensability of the Demiurge to the *Timaeus*, but take this so far as to imply that however he is treated in the context of the dialogue's literary conceit, so he must be, so that he cannot be anything like the Form of the Good, also seem to go too far in their direction.

As far back as Xenophanes, the Greek philosophical theists had been denying anthropomorphism to their conception of gods, and Plato's created gods, planetary movers with *nous* who feel neither pleasure nor pain nor anger nor fear are not anthropomorphic beings either.

There is little antecedent reason to believe that Plato would be committed to any strong form of anthropomorphism in his theology. It is not in keeping with his side of the ancient quarrel, but we can understand the dissonance that many scholars have felt at the combination of a strongly external "unnatural" teleology, as Lennox puts it, coupled with a highly impersonal ultimate deity, and subordinate deities. We are familiar with thinking of divine providence as being untied with a personal divine figure in whom there is either a humane care or feeling towards his human children or at least analogous properties. In his important works on the *Timaeus-Critias*, Johansen has argued that Plato's unnatural teleology is tempered and made more reconcilable to an Aristotelian type of natural teleology by the fact that his divine figurehead - whether understood as craft, or Intellect, or Form - is not moved by a personal sense of mercy or mortal psychological reasons.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ [2004]. Johansen (J.) is right though that there is something rather impersonal about the Demiurge, and that he cannot be thought of as a personal god, nor is satisfying individual humans the goal of his cosmic teleology. J. leans towards but does not conclusively endorse the metaphysically ambiguous "symbolizing *technē*" for the identity of the Demiurge, a suggestion he credits to Michael Frede (83ff). I hardly see how

This, he thinks makes it a less virulent form of creationism or intelligent design. There is something to this. Plato's god is not Yahweh. He is not anthropomorphic, and one would pray to him for special favor entirely in vain. One ought to emulate him or the gods he created, but that is not a "personal relationship" with god. The only 'covenant' he upholds is the impersonal Laws of Destiny. Live wisely and be reborn well. If not, then suffer the consequences.

On the other hand, the issue of whether A) the universe is designed into patterns from without for some overall moral purpose, and B) whether that moral purpose is to be understood along the lines of interpersonal relationships and ethics that hold between human beings are two separate matters. Plato's gods establish justice systematically and by general rules just as presented in the *Laws*, but the eschatological system that they use to achieve this is the same throughout many works as we have suggested. Good souls are placed in better places, worse souls are given the punishment that are necessary for their ultimate improvement (cf. *Grg* 478*aff*). No harm is ever done to souls since the gods do take no action to deliberately worsen these souls beyond the contortions that necessity conflicts upon such intellects when they are born into bodies for which the gods are not responsible, but rather the wandering cause whereas they design the bodies of mortal living things in such ways as to better allow them to recapture their lost divinity. Hence Plato's theology is very much committed to A) without a commitment to B).

calling the Demiurge an implementer of craft is anything more of answer than 'Craftsman is Craftsman.' He rejects Deflationary Immanentist interpretations of the Demiurge, such as Cornford's as he recognizes that "The demiurge *and* the forms...are ontologically separate from and prior to the created cosmos (80-1)." So he endorsed Demiurgical Transcendentalism. He also rejects that the Demiurge can be any of the Forms (which he sees as deflationary too) on the grounds that the Forms and not the Demiurge are called father to becoming at 50c7-d3. He seems to be off the list but J. concludes that he is the father of the ordered universe and this is pre-creation (81-2). I find the logic of this argument baffling, and question begging. Isn't the fact that the Forms are called Father to becoming evidence in favor of identifying them with the father and maker? It's very unclear what kind of ontological status is left for the *technē* wielder to have. In an otherwise exceptionally good book, J.'s treatment of the Demiurge is a weak point.

As a final point, I think it worth saying that it is vital to see that this can be true. Failure to recognize that one can hold A while denying B has at times led to or exacerbated a sense that there is a gulf between Plato's ontology, with the Forms, on the one hand, and a theology with the anthropomorphized mythical character of the Demiurge on the other. But the Demiurge is the Form of the Good, represented anthropomorphically for certain didactic reasons, with clues enough to let us know who or what he really is. There is no separation between theology, cosmology, and ontology in late Plato. Preconceptions of what anyone of these should mean, will only warp our understanding of what these are for Plato.

CONCLUSION

“We [typically] say that men should neither investigate into the greatest god and the entire cosmos, nor busy themselves in discovering causes, since it is actually impious to do so -but it turns out, it seems, that the correct view is completely the opposite.” Laws 821a2-5

It is my hope that we have not put the lie to what the Athenian of the *Laws* says. Plato could not be clearer that the contemplation of the Gods will lead one to a superior character by means of greater rational knowledge, *nous* in particular. Why that should be so can be understood only if we understand what his gods are. His immanent gods display the rational motion of *nous*, constant, although in motion, orderly, and self-same. They carry out justice without corruption, they inspire man, at his best to music, astronomy, and the other ennobling arts. His transcendent god is the Good, and as we know from the *Republic*, it is the knowledge of the Good that is the ultimate end of all the study that the philosopher-rulers undertake. To know the Good is to be best able to bring it about for oneself and one's city. It should not then surprise us, if I am correct in my identification of the Demiurge with the Good, that coming to know the greatest god is the most pious and virtuous undertaking possible, in Plato's eyes.

Beyond that, hopefully several long-standing puzzles, such as I argued in chapter 5 were generated from the ΔN thesis, may have been solved. At the very least, by challenging this almost universally held assumption and arguing that it rests on misreading and false assumptions, I hope to have opened up a wider range of possible view points and to have created fresh imaginative space in which to generate new interpretations of Plato's theology should my own prove incorrect. Plato would have us call upon the gods for help before embarking on a discussion of them, lest, without their aid, we should fall into impiety by speaking of them falsely. At the outset of this

investigation, however, I dare say one would not have had any idea upon whom he was calling for aid. Yet finding the God, no further search would be necessary. Even the gods, it seems, are not immune to Meno's paradox.

The Father and Maker of all, we were told, is difficult to know, and impossible to proclaim to all. Doubtless there are questions yet unanswered and objections and challenges that await this view. If our view endures trials, we will be more knowledgeable for it. If we are found wrong, we will thank those who bring us correction, for it is better to know our own ignorance. But, let us hope for the best. Let us hope that we have understood our subject rightly, treated it justly, and have spoken only the truth. For out of all that he wrote, I believe Plato's most godlike words were these:

Truth heads the list of all things good, for gods and men alike.

Let anyone who intends to be happy and blessed

be its partner from the start, so that he may live

as much of his life as possible

a man of truth.

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